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LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1830.



THE
HEIRESS OF BRUGES;

A TALE

OF THE YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED.

BY

THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN,

AUTHOR OF "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS,"
"TRAITS OF TRAVEL," &c.

Alasse, alasse! what a thing Love is; why it is like to an ostry faggot,
that once set on fire, is as hardly to be quenched, as the bird crocodill driven
out of her nest.

LODGE AND GREEN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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THE
HEIRESS OF BRUGES.

CHAPTER I.

FOR three weeks after the day recorded in the last chapter, the events at Welbasch Castle proceeded in a rapid yet monotonous movement towards a sure catastrophe, like the waters of a river hurrying on to the precipice over whose brink they must inevitably fall. The general course of circumstances in a beleagured town or fort may be imagined—continual fatigue, peril, privation, and consequent excitement, varied by local accidents

or individual character. That of the commander must greatly influence the complexion of the whole. If he be ardent, resolute, and young, vigour and enterprize will characterise his struggles. It may be well supposed that De Bassenveldt's conduct was strongly marked by these qualities; but joined to them was a tact of cautious dissimulation peculiar to his own nature, perhaps to that of his whole race, and varying with wile and stratagem his daring feats in war, as well as in love.

Theresa, in her hours of deep reflection, had a clear conception of this union in the character of the man with whom her own destiny seemed now more than ever linked. But, far above all revolving doubts and fears for herself arose her apprehension for Lambert Boonen. In his unpractised, and to her view his artless nature, she imagined nothing suitable to cope with De Bassenveldt, a rival at whose mercy she held him to be. His timid incredulity of his own influence on her was strikingly contrasted with that rival's bold reli-

ance on himself, and she felt that his best security rested on Count Ivon's respect for her father, and his passion for her ; but she still doubted if even these, though they might doubly insure the apprentice-lover from any open violence, would protect him from private treachery—for she feared that the impetuous, yet cautious De Bassenveldt was, on occasion, capable of using either.

Of Beatrice she scarcely knew what to think, in connection with this chief topic of her mind. She had her constant assurance of Lambert Boonen's safety and of Count Ivon's utter indifference to the pretensions of one whom she professed him to consider as a mere shadow ; and at times Theresa thought, with delight, that this arrogant self-confidence might be a further safeguard to her favoured lover. But this absorbing subject, rendering her suspicious of all who might influence it, made her alive to many discrepancies in Beatrice's manner and words. Still she remembered her late ungrounded fears for the apprentice's safety ; and she consoled herself for his renewed absence from



her presence, and the cessation of even his night songs from the tower, in the belief (which, however, she did not venture to communicate to Beatrice) that he had, under some pretext, left the castle, and risked the perils of a return to Brussels to seek her father, acquaint him with his exploit, and demand his consent to his pretensions for her hand. Theresa's next train of thought was in the self-put questions—How then is he to snatch me from this strong hold—how separate my fate from De Bassenveldt's—how save himself and me from the difficulties and dangers which surround us every way?"

Overwhelmed by the greatness of the impediments to her happiness, and afraid that Lambert Boonen was not the being to surmount them, she shrank from their contemplation; but she could never dismiss these reflections from her mind, without their being instantly followed by the thought—Had Count Ivon been so circumstanced, now would *he* have triumphed over all! This involuntary recurrence to De Bassenveldt's supe-

riority was fraught with pain. Turn as she might, she saw no chance of escape, either from personal risks or mental reveries.

Added to these fruitful sources of care, was the solemn oppression that rested on her ever since the apparition that she had so distinctly witnessed. That it was a spirit of another world she had no doubt. That Count Ivon had not been her nocturnal visitor, that it was not his hands which had been, night after night, raised up in blessings over her, was now too plain. What a sinking of the heart followed the oft-rising regret ! how much less was she shocked at the presence of the spirit than by the absence of the man ! She would willingly have unburthened her mind of this solemn secret, but no one was near to whom she could do so. The frivolous Father Jerome, she never thought of as the depositary of her confessions. She dared not make that sacred obligation of her sect a mere matter of form or pious fraud. She could not encounter Beatrice's bitter scorn of every mystery connected with christian faith. To none

others within her reach would she condescend to enter on the subject. How she longed for her father's affection, for the prior's holy privilege, for Lambert Boonen's sympathy, in any of which to repose her secret ! What a blank was around her !

The apparition had no more appeared to Theresa, but the whole population of the castle were loud in the belief that the ghost of Count René had been repeatedly seen in his favourite tower ; and the conviction that Ivon was enjoying the supernatural support of his ancestor's magical powers, had infused into the soldiers a fresh confidence, which rose above all the actual suffering and approaching horrors of their desperate situation. This feeling was strongly cultivated and encouraged by De Bassenveldt, who, be his own practices or opinions what they might, knew well how to profit by the weaknesses of men, and that the empire of imagination is more potent than the influence of fact.

Day after day the resources of the garrison

rapidly failed. Stinted allowances reduced the strength and weakened the spirit of the bravest men. Affairs had not reached that crisis when starvation renders them reckless, and despair new nerves the arm. But it seemed close at hand ; and at the very time when all were agreed in considering it inevitable, a most unlooked-for circumstance occurred, that gave a likelihood of escape from the horrors of famine, or the accessory modes of destruction too commonly dealt out to subdued rebels, as De Bassenveldt and his followers were sure to be considered. The works of the besiegers had been pushed to the closest limits. Mines were effected under the castle walls ; and a breach practicable and complete, gaped in the fortress' shattered side. One day alone appeared to intervene between the garrison and inevitable ruin.

It was now the latter end of May, when, on one of those mornings when hope and sunshine seem to come down together upon earth, and to brighten irresistibly the beings most evidently miserable, the hungry sentinels on the castle ramparts des-

cried a boat passing across the river from the royalist camp, containing, to their astonishment, four or five unarmed men, and a white standard, the common emblem of peace, and in this instance, its hoped for harbinger. The officer in command of the outermost gate of the fortress soon hurried to its portal to receive the flag of truce. The village, after several days of hard-fought resistance, having again fallen into the possession of the besiegers, no more distant point of protection kept off their approaches. Officers and soldiers alike hailed the coming pacificators with delight; but still they were veterans sufficiently aware of the guiles of warfare to expose no indication of such a feeling.

It was therefore to a most stern summons, (issuing from a bristling wall of lances, and a gaping line of wide-mouthed arquebuses) that the herald, whose trumpet had sounded a parley, in his turn answered as follows :

“ In the name of their Highnesses the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, Sovereigns of the Low Countries, of Holland, Zealand and Brabant, I

Nicholas Mengs, herald of the honourable Order of the Fleece, vulgarly called the Golden Fleece, do hereby summon this revolted fortress of Wesbasch, and its chieftain Count Ivon de Bassenveldt, to receive and harken to, in truce and good faith, the puissant Seigneur Joseph-Paul-Pontis, Marquess of Assembourg, their Highness' special and extraordinary envoy and ambassador, duly authorized and appointed to treat of the surrender of this said fortress of Welbasch to its allegiance, on such conditions as may be graciously set forth, in their Highness' name, by the aforesaid puissant Seigneur Joseph-Paul-Pontis, Marquess of Assembourg."

"Enough said, Sir Herald," replied Lieutenant Gallagher, the officer on duty. "Before you can blow another blast on your trumpet, or shake your truncheon over your head, I will send a messenger to the puissant Count Ivon de Bassenveldt to tell him your business. But in the mean time stand back, I warn you—and particularly that old shaking gentleman in the rose-coloured roquelaure.

These lances are sharp, and the triggers of these arquebuses often slip without being pulled; and a chance blade or bullet might find its way among ye--so stand back till your answer comes!"

The Marquess of Assembourg and his escort quickly acted on this hint, the marquess himself retiring from the line of possible danger with all the shrinking obsequiousness of courtly manners and weak nerves. His companions, three persons in plain suits, and the herald, in all the gaudy trappings of his profession, followed the ambassador's movement; and the whole group stood on one side of the portal, looking upon the fierce garniture that protruded from every casemate and barbican, or bristled above the wall of the bastion where Gallagher had taken his post. A full hour elapsed before any notice was taken of the summons. Gallagher sent messenger after messenger to the castle, but none of them returned; while the anxious soldiers were filled with impatience, and the marquess not a little alarmed at the delay, and more than once strongly

tempted to turn his back and run, rather than brave the questionable reception which awaited his mission. At length, ere his doubts could acquire the perfect consistency of cowardice, the first drawbridge was lowered, the portcullis raised, and Paul Cuyper, the genealogist, was discovered on a bare boned horse (representing the dignity of seneschal, which post, like several others, was vacant in De Bassenveldt's imperfect household) accompanied by an esquire, a trumpeter, and other attendants in due form. As the marquess advanced, in reply to a summons from the esquire and a flourish on the trumpet, Cuyper with mock solemnity and well-travestied punctilio, mouthed forth an invitation that the ambassador should repair to the castle and deliver his message to Count Ivon in person. A moment's trepidation assailed the marquess, as he cast his eyes under the archway and saw the formidable vista of defences extending to the very body of the fortress ; but he felt the impossibility of receding from his task, and with the valour of necessity he sub-

mitted to have his eyes bandaged, and gave himself up to his conductors.

When he had liberty of sight once more, he discovered himself to be in the gothic dining-hall of Welbasch, and his first sensation was a disagreeable one, on perceiving the grotesque and ill-favoured countenances of eastern stamp, which ornamented, as the reader will recollect, the cornices and niches of the hall. But the living faces around him were infinitely more appalling, for they were those of three or four gaunt and fierce-looking officers of De Bassenveldt's regiment, who stood with their colonel himself, sternly awaiting the diplomatic overture which the marquess was expected to propose. On discovering himself thus suddenly confronted with the much dreaded black dragoons, he lost all presence of mind, and with the overabundant civility of alarm, he bent and bowed, and uttered sundry compliments to the group of officers, in all the "taffeta phrase and silken terms" of courtly usage. Totally forgetting all his previous notions of De Bassenveldt's

appearance, he was quite at a loss to distinguish him among the group, all their uniforms being the same. But attributing to the imposing height and pompous bearing of one of the officers all the qualifications for command, he addressed to him some confused and broken fragments of an oft-conned oration which he had prepared for the occasion.

“ May you live to the age of Saint Service, which was full three hundred years, most powerful plenipotentiary !” exclaimed the officer, interrupting him with Spanish grandiloquence, and in bad French,—“ Your air and style prove high-breeding, thick blood, and discrimination to boot. For though I cannot exactly catch the tenor of your speech, it no doubt contains sentiments worthy of being addressed to me, Don Diego Leonis, so called from having killed three lions, single handed, on the Barbary coast, Lieutenant-Colonel in De Bassenveldt’s black dragoons, and who should be, if reward was proportioned to merit, one of the

hundred and fifty-one knights of the Golden Fleece."

The marquess not fully comprehending the Don, and (with the fine sensitiveness of his caste) alarmed lest the smiles of the listeners were at his own expense, stammered forth some answer still less intelligible than his former attempts, inasmuch as a courtier's fear of ridicule is even more potent than personal dread. But Count Ivon came to the ambassador's relief, by avowing himself; and requesting that his propositions and credentials might be forthwith addressed to him. The marquess, re-assured by De Bassenveldt's courteous tone, instantly produced his warrant, and began, with less confusion, to read from a scroll, to which was attached a large medallion of white wax stamped with the archducal signet, a list of propositions, "on which their highnesses," he said, were graciously disposed, in the spirit of Christian mercy and princely magnanimity, to extend their clemency to him and his revolted troops. And

in choosing me," continued the marquess, "to fill the honourable office of this embassy, in preference to a soldier by profession, they have proved their pacific forbearance in a way which no doubt will make due impression."

He then recapitulated the conditions proposed for surrender and free pardon, which only differed from those offered at the same period to the revolted garrisons of Crevecœur and St. Andrews in the addition of one article, claiming the instant relinquishment of all right of detention to the persons of the Dame Marguerite de Lovenskerke and the damsel Theresa Van Rozenhoed, and a peremptory demand to deliver them instantly up to the Marquess of Assembourg, to be conveyed back to his house at Brussels whence they had been abstracted with force and treachery by persons unknown, but supposed to have been agents of Count Ivon de Bassenveldt, into whose power they had notoriously fallen.

"Such," said the marquess, with great suavity, and gradually gaining his self-possession, "such

are the magnanimous proposals which my royal masters the archdukes have condescended to make. It is not for me their poor servant to dilate on the advantages which these terms hold out to you, Count Ivon de Bassenveldt, and the gallant and honourable gentlemen who compose your garrison. Nor need I dwell on the very disagreeable consequences which a rejection would bring to you and them, this very eve of destruction,—to wit, famine, starvation, assault, pillage, plunder, cutting of throats, and sundry other inconveniences ; for when the place falls to-morrow into the hands of the brave Don Juan de Trovaldo and the accomplished Baron Lyderic de Roulemonde, they are resolved to spare neither sex, age, or condition. Therefore —”

“ Stop there, most noble marquess,” said De Bassenveldt. “ I see the fiery glances of my gallant friends here at the threat you utter in the name of a base renegade against his old companions and fellow soldiers. As to the savage resolutions of Don Juan de Trovaldo, let him put

them into execution if he can. We pardon him the intention in consideration of his rank and station. He is a fair enemy. But as for the other person you have named, his threats are, like himself, beneath all notice, except from the sympathy of those degenerate parasites who, like him, abandon the cause of their country, and yoke themselves in the train of foreign tyranny. Let his name be mentioned no more !”

With these words, Count Ivon’s eyes, whose general expression was of warm tenderness, sparkled with a brightness that seemed to pierce the marquess’ attenuated frame, and fluttered his frill and ruffles of Mechlin lace, like a sun-beam dancing through the foliage of an aspen. He began to stammer forth a reply. But De Bassenveldt, instantly resuming his tone and manner of peculiar courtesy, advanced still closer, and said, with a smile,

“ Marquess, excuse me, I pray, if your mention of a worthless name has betrayed me into a moment’s warmth. To you individually I would do

all honour, as well as to the office in virtue of which you favour my castle with your presence. I would fain have given an old acquaintance of my father a better reception. But such as the times allow of, you shall have; you will adjourn with me to partake of a beleaguered fortress' fare, and such as it is, it shall not be followed, I promise you, by the treatment ere now dealt to honourable men, after the treacherous repast served by archducal and archdevilish hypocrisy. In the mean time my answer for me and my garrison shall be considered; and as to the dame and the damsel who honour our poor walls with their presence, while their natural protector is held in base durance at Brussels, I refer you to them for their own decision. They are at liberty to act for themselves in all things. And now, to partake such cheer as we may afford you! Your attendants are cared after without."

The marquess followed De Bassenveldt's movement through the folding doors into an inner room, by no means rendered easier in his feelings

by the revived mention of the outlawed Count Gabriel, the sire of such a son, nor by the severe allusion to the repast at which he had himself presided previous to the arrest of Van Rozenhoed and the other deputies of Bruges ; and still less by the involuntary mixture of sternness with civility in Count Ivon's look and tone. Deeply repenting the fear of confessing himself afraid, which had made him accept the appointment to this perilous embassy, the poor marquess mechanically took his seat at the board, in obedience to De Bassenveldt's invitation ; and the latter also, with Don Diego Leonis, Captain McIntyre, and three or four others of the superior officers, assumed their places, grasped the clumsy, long-bladed, and sharp-pointed knives, and prepared to wield the huge two-pronged iron forks, which were among the most recently introduced luxuries of those days.

“ Remove the covers !” said De Bassenveldt to the attendants, and immediately the large and shining copper cones, which served to keep the

viands warm as they were carried through the vaults and corridors leading from the kitchen, were taken off, and the savoury fumes that steamed up produced an evident, but as the marquess thought a very ill-bred, demonstration of lip-smacking delight upon his entertainers.

“Marquess,” said De Bassenveldt, with much gravity, “will you permit me to offer you a portion of this hashed horse-flesh?”

The marques sprang up three inches from his oaken chair, and as soon as he could recover his electrified faculties he stammered an excuse. But De Bassenveldt, waiving ceremony, had not waited for the refusal, but passed the dish round to his hungry companions; and before the marquess could at all regain his composure he perceived that the horrid ragoût was cleanly devoured.

“Most illustrious ambassador,” exclaimed Don Diego Leonis, who sat at the end of the table opposite to his chief, “may I have the felicity of serving your excellency to some of this stewed

jackass, a preparation of infinite virtue in cases of over-active appetite?"

"With great gratitude, most honourable Don Diego, for the polite offer so graciously made me"—began the marquess; but ere he half finished the preliminary phrase of his intended refusal, the pewter platter had gone its rounds, and was emptied of its revolting contents with magical celerity.

The half of a roasted dog was the next discovered dish, and Captain McIntyre, with imperturbable solemnity, offered a share of it to the still astonished marquess, who saw it vanish as the other delicacies had done, before he could muster up a suitable sentence of refusal. A cat pie and some fricaseed mice were successively handed round to him. He protested he did not feel in the least degree hungry; and as the last mentioned abomination was greedily devoured, his disgust became uncontrollable. A dessert of onions, raw turnips, and horse radish, rapidly placed on

the board,* was not sufficient to bring back his stomach to its wonted equilibrium; and pledging to the health of his host in a goblet of water, the only visible beverage, he claimed permission to rise from table, and to be allowed to pay his respects to Madame Marguerite and Theresa, and make them a communication on the part of the worshipful Burgomaster of Bruges, who, he begged leave to state, was already, through the archdukes' clemency, in full possession of his personal liberty, as was attested in a letter to his daughter, written by his own hand.

Count Ivon immediately rose, and beckoning from the outer hall an officer, whose youthful air and unwhiskered face of dark grave beauty seemed fitting to a messenger for a lady's bower, he despatched the substance of the marquess's request to the lady prisoners. An order to have

* The description of a parallel repast is given by some of the Flemish historians, as having formed a wedding feast during the siege of Cambrai, in the year 1581.

Lieutenant Gallagher relieved from his guard, and a private message to him and the chaplain to prepare them for the marquess's visit, were simultaneously given by Count Ivon; and ere a quarter of an hour elapsed, the same young officer (who was none other than Beatrice) preceded the courtly steps of the ambassador along the passages leading to the ladies' apartments.

As the marquess entered Theresa's antechamber, Lieutenant Gallagher swaggered out of it; and when Beatrice opened the door of the saloon, he observed the figure of an ecclesiastic gliding through another at the opposite end of the room. Theresa and Madame Marguerite were seated with due decorum. Beatrice closed the door, and the marquess advanced, made a succession of profound bows, and at length spoke.

“ Ah! my dear ladies, my respectable dame, my lovely damsel, how may I express in suitable terms my profound sorrow to see you in this state of thralldom! How describe the respect and

attachment which has made me brave all the perils of this terrible place to accomplish your liberty !”

“ Pray do not give yourself that trouble, marquess,” said Madame Marguerite ; “ your grief will find utterance if it is sincere ; and as to your courage, methinks it is not marvellous if it only brave dangers which a couple of women do not tremble at. If, indeed, you had come in a suit of Seville armour, casque on head, and lance in rest, as befits a champion and a true knight, well and good ; but who ever gained liberty for imprisoned maid or widow in a cambric ruff, a cloth of gold vest, embroidered gloves, crimson hose, and velvet brodequins !—Talk not, prithee, of attachment or respect, and least of all of aught that is chivalric and brave.”

Theresa compassionating the confusion into which the poor marquess was thrown by this tirade, rose from her chair, and with a graceful air approached and begged him to be seated. She then assured him of the grateful sense she retained

of his hospitable and delicate treatment of herself and her kinswoman during the short period they had occupied his mansion, and as little abruptly as possible, she requested tidings of her father.

“ Gladly, most amiable young lady, do I hasten to communicate intelligence of your very worshipful parent. Here is a letter, entrusted to my care, from the excellent burgomaster’s own hand. It will speak more to the purpose than my feeble testimony to his health, happiness, and restoration to liberty and honour.”

“ Heaven be praised !” exclaimed Theresa. “ Oh, how grateful I am for this news ! Madame Marguerite, do you hear this ?—oh, thank the marquess for me—for us both—while I read my dear father’s letter !”

She retired to a distant recess, broke the seal, and began to read ; while the marquess, in recovered confidence at her words, approached Madame Marguerite, and with an insinuating air strove, and not unsuccessfully, to bring her to reason. With as little circumlocution as was compatible

with his artificial style of speech, he commenced a train of statements of all that had passed at court, the intrigues of the courtiers, the preparations for the campaign, the force of Trovaldo's army, the certain and immediate ruin that awaited De Bassenveldt, if he rejected the terms of surrender; and wound up all with a picture of the disgrace which would await a person of her quality (supposing her to escape the horrors of the coming assault) in being included among a rebel garrison, and marched back a prisoner to Brussels. He touched on the splendour and munificence of the archdukes, spoke of the prodigious liking they had taken to Lyderic, and their determination to marry him to Theresa. But the marquess struck a tenderer chord than all the others, in declaring that "with the sanction of the archduchess herself, and the certainty of a distinguished station in the household, suitable to the rank of the Marchioness of Assembourg, he had, after full consideration, made up his mind to offer himself, his fortune, and his honours, for her acceptance, too happy in

the hope of reviving in her heart ever so feeble a spark of that flame of conjugal delight which had whilom made Ralpho de Lovenskerke the most envied of husbands."

"Oh, my dear marquess!" exclaimed Madame Marguerite, "how you overwhelm me! I am quite taken by surprise—how gallant, how generous you are! How exquisite to be rescued by you from this horrid haunt of rebellion and magic! But in so delicate an affair, on a point so tender, you must suffer me to consult a friend."

"Amiable woman! assuredly—Who? Your lovely young cousin yonder?"

"Oh no, no!"

"What, the holy man whom I saw retire from the chamber as I entered?"

"No, no, not him."

"Who else then may it be, excellent lady, that can in this den of outlawry claim the gentle title of friendship with the virtue, the blood, the beauty, of the Lovenskerkes?"

"Ah, eloquent and elegant marquess," rejoined

the blushing dame, (half turning her face, that the time-touched features might be taken in profile,) “ it is indeed a dear and confidential friend with whom I would in decorum consult—one Lieutenant Gallagher, a young Irishman of old family—”

“ Humph !” interrupted the marquess, “ a young Irishman !”

“ Oh,” exclaimed the dame, somewhat alarmed at any hesitation on his part, “ if you, marquess, have the remotest shade of objection, I waive my wish at once.”

“ By no means, dearest Madame Marguerite ; only that it struck me just that these Irish adventurers—pardon the phrase—who swarm in these countries, have a wild and wavering reputation when female friendship is in question.”

“ Ah, if you but knew *him*, marquess !”

“ Whatever you please, gentlest and best of your sex ! Your friends shall be my friends, and yourself all things and every thing to me.”

“ Oh, marquess !”

“ Ah, Madame Marguerite !”

But the tenderness of the colloquy was cut short by the entrance of Lieutenant Gallagher himself, who came by Count Ivon's orders to announce to the marquess that a second flag of truce had arrived at the castle outworks, despatched by the Spanish general, who had become impatient, and somewhat anxious at the ambassador's delay. The marquess, despite the tenderness of the situation, felt his heart beat with joy at so honourable an excuse for escaping from the manifold terrors of Welbasch Castle, and he pressed Madame Marguerite's immediate decision and departure, with an ardour that her simplicity placed solely to the score of her own attractions and his passion. She therefore proceeded to *consult* with her dear friend Gallagher, in the usual tone and manner of those who are resolved to follow their own advice in cases where their minds are already made up. Nor was she slightly mortified at the readiness and *nonchalance* with which the lieutenant assented to her plan, strongly recommending her "to take the old marquess at his word, wrap her-

self up in his rose-coloured roquelaure, and be off with him to Brussels, ere his proposal had time to cool." The cutting cold-heartedness of this speech brought the tears into Madame Marguerite's eyes, like the keen air of a frosty morning. Equally alive to unkindness as sensible of the contrary, she saw at a glance how cheap the Irishman held her, and clearly perceiving that he was glad to be rid of her, she flounced away and told the marquess, with a burst of mingled mortification and modesty, that she was his from that instant for life and death!

During Madame Marguerite's and Gallagher's short consultation, the marquess had approached Theresa to urge her immediate departure, with her kinswoman, under his protection. Her notice of his proposal was the utterance of one phrase, more in soliloquy than reply,—

"Can my father have written this letter!" and at the same time her eyes continued fixed on the document which she had read over and over.

"Lady," exclaimed the marquess, rather impa-

tiently, "I saw him write it in the very cabinet of his excellency Don Zeronimo Zaputa, who most kindly assisted him in its composition ; and it was afterwards given to me by your father's own hands, while he walked in the grand audience hall of the palace, where he was taking the air, followed closely by a royal halberdier, so honourable is his treatment by their highness' state minister."

"Dictated by Zaputa ! attended by a halberdier !" repeated Theresa.

"And, pardon a thousand times, my dear young lady !" continued the marquess, "if the onerous obligations of my present functions, and personal agitation on another point, have made me too long forgetful that the accomplished and gallant Baron Lyderic de Roulemonde, panting to urge for himself the hopes which your father's letter in his favour so strongly justifies, has sent with me on this mission his own trusty follower and devoted partizan, the young tanner of Bruges, who has also just seen your father at Brussels, and of whom you may recollect we conversed on the very night

of your and my beloved friend Madame Marguerite's extraordinary abduction from my mansion, the details of which I am at a calmer and cooler period to learn. This young man, specially charged by the amiable baron to see and communicate with you, now waits with my own immediate attendants in some of the precincts of this awful place, but will, no doubt, at your request, receive instant admission to your presence."

While the marquess spoke, Theresa felt her cheeks burn. A confidence that the devoted attachment of Renault Claassen to her alone had prompted whatever measures he had taken, and reliance on the prudence inspired by his fidelity made her glow with joy. And she felt irresistibly convinced that he now came at all risks, baffling De Roulemonde and braving De Bassenveldt, to announce some co-operation with Lambert Boonen for her escape. Her eyes sparkled with a brightness which the marquess considered the natural consequence of Lyderic's message; and she imme-

diately requested Gallagher to demand, on her part, Count Ivon's assent to the admission of the person named Claassen, forming one of the marquess' suite. While Gallagher retired in pursuance of her wish, and the marquess received from Madame Marguerite the rapid assurance of her readiness to set out, Theresa again read her father's letter; and then plainly saw in every line the forced influence of the minister, prompting to a pretended freeman, but a virtual prisoner, praises of Lyderic, and commands for her acceptance of his suit, which she knew his heart must have abhorred.

Madame Marguerite quickly commenced her bustling preparations, taking it for granted that Theresa would accompany her, and forgetting in the new impulse that hurried her away, all her so lately formed impressions and friendships. She announced her approaching departure to Nona, who shewed evident symptoms of pleasure at the news. The marquess meanwhile repaired to the hall, once more to receive, in due form, De Bassenveldt's

answer to his proposals ; and he had no sooner left our heroine's presence, than Renault Claassen was ushered into it by Gallagher, who as instantly withdrew.

Left alone with the object of his soul's devotion, the young tanner felt an instant return of that overpowering timidity which paralyses every chance of success for such a lover—at least with such a being as Theresa. She was forced to take the lead in the hurried colloquy ; and his very answers to her questions betrayed a confusion which, by one less convinced of his honour, might have been ascribed to treachery. Enough, however, was explained to convince her that he had only still kept up the semblance of complicity in his father's treason, as the means of serving her, that he had obtained, through Lyderic's interest, an appointment in the civil department attached to the besieging army, where, in conjunction with Jans Brocklaer, who acted under him, he watched every movement of the siege, to be ready at an emergency to aid her escape from the double dan-

gers that beset her ; and that having avoided all suspicion of being an agent in her flight from Brussels, he was employed by Lyderic in frequent communications with that place, and with her father, in whose confidence he was completely. Theresa now had her suspicions of her father's situation fully confirmed. With the nominal privilege of freedom, he was in fact a state prisoner, under strict surveillance, and violent measures against him were only withheld by Lyderic's influence, until he succeeded in obtaining Theresa for himself, and a consequent right to the confiscated property, which was held out as the sure reward of success against De Bassenveldt. His friend Don Zeronimo Zaputa had also obtained the archduke's consent to the mission of the Marquess d'Assembourg, and Isabella's sanction to his intended offer to Madame Marguerite, in the hope that all these complicated motives might influence the conduct of Theresa, on which so many interests now hinged. A scrap of paper, written in the burgo-master's hand, and with difficulty secreted by

Claassen, was now given to Theresa. It contained but one sentence.

“ In my letter, dictated by Zaputa, and written but to temporize with our tyrants, read Ivon de Bassenveldt, instead of Lyderic de Roulemonde, and you will know my inflexible decision.”

This was indeed a sentence decisive of all Theresa's fondly cherished hopes, and utterly destructive of Lambert Boonen's chance of obtaining her. In the letter referred to, nothing could be more strong than the terms of approval and the tone of decision, in favour of the suitor whose name was now, it would seem, so indelibly fixed on. Theresa felt the chill palor steal on her cheeks, and into her quivering lips, which then, for the first time during the conference, ventured to utter the one name that they had twenty times silently syllabled.

“ And Master Lambert Boonen ! Have you, Mynheer Claassen, nothing to tell of him ?” was her faint question.

“Nothing,” replied Renault. “From the night that we parted beyond the glacis of Brussels, I have seen or heard nought of him.”

“Then I am indeed a wretch!” exclaimed Theresa, covering her face with her hands, and sinking on a seat.

“How am I to understand this?” cried Renault. “Are then, indeed, my father’s notions true, and is Master Boonen the happy mortal who has gained your heart? Oh, say if it be so, that I may know the true way of doing you service. Ignorant of every thing but my devotion to your happiness, I thought I was forwarding it best in being the medium of whatever linked you closer to Count Ivon de Bassenveldt. Recommended by Prince Maurice, approved by your father, and himself so irresistible, what else could I have supposed?”

“Since I entered this castle, I have never seen Count Ivon’s face, nor heard him speak.”

“Indeed! What then was his design in for-

cibly seizing you—what his present motives? How am I to reconcile all this?”

“ Oh, Mynheer Claassen, think not of it now. Let one confession, forced from me by my misery, suffice. I am sworn, vowed to Master Boonen, by the holiest pledges of faith and honour. For weeks he has ceased to appear to me as he was for awhile allowed to do. He has done a deed of desperate gallantry—and while I believed—oh, how fatally believed him to be urging his suit to my father, he is, too much, I fear me, lost to me for ever. Oh, in pity seek him out ! Devote all your energy to that only object for which I value hope or life ! My eternal gratitude will be yours. You have saved him once before. You acted with him for me—now, act with *me* in discovering him.”

“ Good God ! how surprised, how overwhelmed I am at this strange news !” murmured Renault.

“ Oh, in mercy to me, give no way to surprise just now. Let energy and courage fill your heart. Think only of one object. Let the image of Lambert Boonen, suffering perhaps all the agony of

captivity, be alone in your sight. Fly to seek him—he is your friend—he is my lover, my chosen, my betrothed ! If indeed he still live—if jealous hatred has not already killed him, and doomed me to utter despair !”

At this moment Beatrice entered the room, and advancing to Renault Claassen, who stood almost stupified under the influence of Theresa's suffering, she said that she came to interrupt the interview, on the urgent behalf of Master Lambert Boonen, who having heard that his friend Mynheer Claassen was in the castle, had requested his presence, even for a moment, in Count René's tower.

There are emotions of piercing joy that break in upon the deepest grief, which the pen may as vainly attempt to describe, as may the pencil to give the colouring of those vivid sun-bursts which dart athwart a lowering sky. And until the pen can become liquid with the heart's own essence, or the pencil be dipped in the golden hues of Heaven, the task had better be unattempted

quite. Such a rush, such a pang let it be called, of delight broke on Theresa at Beatrice's words. She had no power to speak or move. She heard a voice of reprieve from the living death to which her fears had doomed her. She stood benumbed and motionless, and saw Beatrice and Renault Claassen leave the room, unable to utter a single sentence of all she would have given worlds to express. She was almost immediately roused from this state, by the simultaneous return of Madame Marguerite, equipped for departure, and the Marquess of Assembourg, with signs of consternation on his visage far surpassing anything that had been previously witnessed in the castle since the commencement of the siege. The causes of this climax of his terrors may be shortly told.

When he repaired to the great hall on Count Ivon's summons, he found it thronged with officers and soldiers. Their haggard, half starved, desperate looks were more appalling still than the display of swords and spears which rose above their heads or glittered in their hands. Count

Ivon stood at the end of the hall, and as the marquess (following Gallagher's steps) tremblingly took his place beside him, he spoke, holding at the same time a written scroll in his hand,—

“ Marquess of Assembourg, in the presence of all my officers and soldiers composing this garrison, except those on immediate duty or unable from unhealed wounds to muster here, I have to commit to you, in my own and their joint name, our brief reply to the proposals of surrender of which you have been the bearer. In a deed like this every man here is equal. All are alike concerned, and you can testify to your masters that all are unanimous. Listen then to our answer !”

Then opening out the scroll, he read aloud,

“ To the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, the assumed sovereigns of Holland, Flanders, and Brabant, usurping deputies of Spanish tyranny, we, Ivon de Bassenveldt and four hundred and sixty-eight officers and soldiers composing this garrison of Welbasch, do, with scorn and defiance, reject the proffered terms—preferring glory to gain, and

death to dishonour—swearing by the memory of our comrades killed already in the conflict, in the name of our country which watches our career, and in the sight of Heaven to whom we commit our souls, that we will die, with the old men, the women and children barbarously forced in upon us, inch by inch, by famine and disease—or perish each and all in the rubbish of these walls and the blood of our enemies, sooner than surrender the fortress, or hold further communication with them except at the sword's point—So help us, Heaven !”

A deep buzz of approval breathed through the throng of armed men, and rolled up to the vaulted roofs, more like the solemn heavings of broad breasts in prayer, than the enthusiastic burst of valour from excited hearts. The awful intensity of the sounds curdled the marquess' blood and made his flesh creep. No man stirred from his place, nor flourished his blade, nor raised his voice for some moments—but at length the fixed solemnity of the scene was interrupted by Don

Diego Leonis, who, raising his arm, exclaimed in a tone of deep reality—that perhaps for the first time in his life deprived his exaggerated phrases of any ludicrous effect,—

“Marquess, Envoy, Ambassador, or by whatever title we must accord you, you have seen to day the fare on which we feed. Think not that when even such as that is exhausted that we shall be in want; for as long as our left arms hang to our bodies we shall not starve, but will gnaw them to the bone, reserving our good right hands to fight for and hold fast the cause we are sworn to!”

The fierce murmur of applause and the ferocious and cannibal grin which seemed the general echo of this speech, almost deprived the marquess of his senses outright.

“Comrades, to your quarters all!” said De Bassenveldt, in the firm deep tone of command. The crowded mass immediately moved off by the various entrances, with a heavy and hollow tramp, in the silent steadiness of desperation.

“Marquess, farewell! Safe conduct waits on you under the guidance of this officer,” courteously exclaimed Count Ivon. The marquess unconsciously stammered forth some reply, and followed Lieutenant Gallagher to Theresa’s apartment. Breathing shortly and wiping his clammy brow, he sat down on the nearest seat, and readily accepted Madame Marguerite’s offer of some cordial of a special virtue, of which the urgent wants of the garrison had not deprived her. A rapid debate now took place on the subject of Theresa’s movements; Madame Marguerite considered even hesitation as little less than insanity; but when convinced by Theresa’s positive manner that she was resolved not to quit the castle, she believed that the sudden privilege of escape had actually turned her brain. She appealed to the marquess, to Nona, and to Trinette, who were both busily employed in preparing her packages, if they were not authorized in using force to obtain a lunatic’s compliance with measures for her own safety. Father Jerome appearing at the

moment to take leave, she next turned for advice to him ; and in the mean time the marquess, somewhat recovered, exerted all his eloquence to influence Theresa's departure. She replied to all these persuasions with a calm refusal ; and at length the re-appearance of Renault Claassen, still under Beatrice's convoy, made her spring from the torturing solicitations that assailed her, to make one breathless inquiry which need scarcely be repeated here.

“ I *have* seen him—he is well and safe—his only object in seeing me was that I might certify to you that he was so, and assure you from him that to-morrow would end all doubts, all cares, and in its results be conclusive of your joint destiny. He entreats you to wait with courage and confidence for these results. He bids you remember that he is near you, watching over you, and giving his whole mind to your safety. And, thus having done his bidding, oh, let me add that I too am utterly devoted to you. Let what will hang on the terrible issue of to-morrow, remember that I

shall be ready with him—your lover—and your old tried follower, Jans Brocklaer, to snatch you from every peril that the victor or the vanquished, that De Roulemonde or De Bassenveldt may doom you to. We shall be at the proper moment for escape, at the point from whence to quit the castle. So cared for, keep a good heart. The object dearest to all parties is your safety; and Heaven cannot, will not, cease to shield its best and brightest work !”

These impassioned words were scarce uttered, when Lieutenant Gallagher once more appeared, summoning the marquess, and announcing a fresh parley, and a violent demand for him on the part of Trovaldo. The marquess, rejoiced at the summons, seized Madame Marguerite by the arm, and declared that as Theresa was wilfully bent on her own destruction, no more could be done than to leave her to her fate.

“ Be it so, be it so, unfortunate girl !” exclaimed Madame Marguerite; “ let’s away, let’s away ! But ah ! Heaven and Saint Agnes save

me ! what has become of my dear Fanchon, my precious and beloved Fanchon ? Oh, where is she, where is she ? Nona, Trinette, Father Jerome, Theresa, Beatrice, Lieutenant Gallagher ! tell me, oh, tell me, some one,—where is my beloved Fanchon ?”

This was uttered in a burst of sincere affection and imploring gesticulations to each individual. They all unfeignedly pitied her, even in that moment of such varied agitation ; for evident sincerity, even when it is the proof of weakness, is sure to command sympathy. But none present, with one exception, were able to answer her almost frantic inquiries. That one was Trinette, whose artless countenance could not conceal a deep glow of self-betrayal. The keenness of Madame Marguerite’s alarm quickly discovered these signs of confusion ; and she instantly threw herself upon Trinette, caught her in her arms, and with half-choked utterance, and a flood of tears, she implored her to restore her much-loved favourite.

Trinette, in her turn totally overcome, dropped on her knees, and supplicated Madame Mar-

guerite's forgiveness, saying that it was not her own doing, but that she could not refuse the repeated entreaties of Mathieu Toolmans, the under cook (and notoriously her lover), who at last swore he would take the pampered animal by force if she persisted in refusing to procure it for him.

Madame Marguerite listened, almost petrified with dread. But she revived again, when Trinette proposed to fly instantly to the kitchen and see if it was not too late.

“ Too late !” murmured Madame Marguerite faintly, as she sank on a chair and seized the marquess' trembling arm. Ere the latter could prepare a sentence urging immediate departure, Trinette reappeared, and Madame Marguerite sprang to meet her in almost convulsive joy at seeing the white silky hair of her favourite shining on her arm. Seizing upon the animal, covering it with caresses, and folding it to her bosom, she scarcely observed that its body felt bloated and its limbs stretched out and stiff. She had no time to inquire further ; and it was not till she and the marquess, with Renault Claassen and his

other attendants had fairly quitted the castle, and arrived within the Spanish lines, that she discovered that her beloved pet existed but in effigy, and that she now possessed of it but the skin, hastily stuffed with wool ! The cook, in the dearth of even dog's flesh for the garrison, could not in conscience suffer poor Fanchon to escape, while Christian men and women drooped for still less natural food. Trinette could no longer resist her lover's designs upon the poor animal, and Madame Marguerite's confusion on the marquess' proposal, offered an opportunity not to be lost for completing the catastrophe.

And even here we may despatch the subject of this sacrifice, by saying that Madame Marguerite quickly became reconciled to it. The stuffed figure was soon as much matter of interest as the living dog had been. It was no real sympathy that had endeared the animal to her. A selfish inanity had created a want. A lap-dog was as usual for a grown infant as a doll for a growing one. The mere force of habit attached her to the

thing, with which no *idea* was connected. It ceased to live; but it was still there in all its external reality, and the pleasure was as great as ever. Are attachments to *pets* in general, however amiable, a whit more intellectual than Madame Marguerite's? That they were to the full as selfish in her days, let one instance suffice. During the blockade of Paris by Henry IV., in the year 1590, the Duchess of Montpensier (sister of the Guises and the great heroine of the league) was offered golden chains and rings to the value of two thousand crowns for her dog. She refused, saying, "She would reserve it for her own eating, when her private store of provisions was consumed."

CHAPTER II.

No sooner had the Marquess of Assembourg communicated to Trovaldo and De Roulemonde the circumstances of his embassy, and set out for Brussels (escorting Madame Marguerite with a guard of honour), to lay the defiance of De Bassenveldt at the archdukes' feet, than the most furious hostility of the besiegers was renewed against the devoted castle of Welbasch. Neither Trovaldo nor Lyderic had looked for a different result from the summons for surrender. The spirit of the garrison and its commander was now too well

proved to give a hope of their submission to aught but the uttermost necessity. In the frequent councils of war, held in the besieging camp, it had been proposed by some of the older and calmer officers, to wait the sure effects of famine, and spare the bloody sacrifice of an assault. But the fierceness of Trovaldo's nature and the malignity of Lyderic's, but stimulated by the influence of what is commonly called the *tender* passion, urged them to oppose all temporising measures, and to push to extremity the most violent means afforded by united bravery and science. While, therefore, the general in chief gave his whole attention to breaching the walls, in which his perseverance was, as has been told, successful; his second in command, directing his efforts to the recovery of the village, had with the aid of Scipio Spinelli, now the chief engineer, and by the labours of some hundreds of colliers, brought by force from the neighbouring districts of Liege and Luxembourg, followed up night and day, a series of mining operations, which

Lyderic's local knowledge directed to the most vulnerable parts of the castle.

Against this combination was opposed all that skill and courage could effect. Defences the most approved by the rules of art were, under the instructions of the most scientific of the officers, thrown up behind the gaping ruins of the breach, at which the whole mass of peasantry, men and women, who had been driven into the castle, worked with untiring perseverance. The approaches of the miners were undertaken to be met by Count Ivon's peculiar care. Well informed as was Lyderic in the general localities of the vaults, and knowing as he did De Bassenveldt's character, there was yet a depth of ingenuity in the first, and of resolution in the latter, that he was still to learn. For the bold race of chieftains by whom the fortress had been raised had successively laboured to its perfection, by a series of excavations in the inmost heart of the rock on which it stood, forming ready made countermines of most intricate combination, suited to meet that last

emergency at some time to be looked for, but the period for which had never till now arrived. The secret of these deep recesses had ever been confined to the sole keeping of the living heir of Welbasch, like that of the hidden treasures of the harem in the breast of the reigning sultan. Count Ivon, an infant at the time of his father's exile, was of course unable to become the depository of this trust, and he had often lamented this ignorance of it in his conversations with Lyderic. That he had now, however, acquired the secret, was certain; by what means shall be seen hereafter. And now on the eve of the inevitable day of doom, he transported into these vaults, which extended from tower to tower under the whole line of assault, the remaining store of gunpowder, insufficient to permit the common service of the castle artillery for another week, but enough to ensure the certainty of a terrible revenge, and a general destruction of the assailants in the very moment of their most triumphant pride. The work was done in profound silence; the train laid, and after all was

complete, De Bassenveldt, in the darkness and solitude of those vaults, and of his own deep energy, used to listen alone to the works of his enemies above his head, and the voice of the base Lyderic urging the labourers on ; and thrill with anticipated vengeance on his country's foes, to be bought at the price of his own utter ruin.

But the terrible excitement of such reflections did not disturb the stillness of the passion which, like the very work of solemn darkness he had just done, lay in his heart's deep chambers, influencing the whole combination of motives and feelings that worked so actively above. His love for Theresa was the source that fed every evident spring of thought. It was *it* which endued him with such versatile powers, which made him shine at the social board, glow in the fight, or burn (like a gem in earth's deep cavities) with an intenser ray, in the mystery of his solitary reveries. Any passion of such strength, pervading a mind of high order, endows the possessor with an influence over those around him, unsought on his part, irresist-

ible on theirs, but insensibly stamping his superiority and their subserviency. In De Bassenveldt it was omnipotent love, before which the pride of Ambition, the pomp of Power, the sternness of Religion, the stoicism of Philosophy, have all bent and bowed, and will for ever while man exists in form and mind such as ineffable Wisdom made him. The effects of this passion on De Bassenveldt, and all who came within its influence, have been traced in the progress of our tale; and it may be well supposed that the object from which it arose was first in his thoughts, in the fateful hours that were now heavily rolling on.

For *her* safety, he had prepared, as he hoped, every means that human prudence could in such circumstances afford. Those means were placed under the special direction of Beatrice, whose masculine powers of mind, devotion to his purposes, and attachment to Theresa, ensured a union of courage and tenderness to uphold her in whatever perils might betide. The Moriscoe, too, was instructed to act in strict support of his sister and

her charge, keeping up the link of communication between them and De Bassenveldt, until the moment when the duty that bound him to his castle walls being finally absolved by their destruction, he could wholly take on himself the care of Theresa, in the bold project of escape which he had with admirable skill arranged. All his powers of mind and body were in active play during the remainder of the day, after the Marquess of Assembourg's departure. Every being was at his post, and the night at length closed heavily on the solemn preparations for the morrow.

But Trovaldo and Lyderic meant to anticipate the dawn. Laying aside their mutual jealousy and dislike, they had co-operated actively to the attainment of the great end now at hand; Trovaldo, in frank ferocity, avowing the whole extent of his designs, but Lyderic breathing no hint of the diabolical consummation which he meant should wait on his. Midnight sounded its solemn peal from the great clock of the castle, and at the signal, the troops of the besieging army des-

tined for the first assault, moved from their muster ground, and crossed, in serried files, the bridge of boats which had been constructed some days previously, a short way below the village. At the same instant, Lyderic, with Spinelli, passed the river in a boat higher up, and prepared to take their preconcerted post in the mine, which was intended to explode under the ramparts that extended from the breach close by the north bastion to the Wizard's Tower, at the southern extremity of the fortress. The veteran Spaniards of the regiment of Valdez, and the Italians of the old regiment of Lombardy, both distinguished in most of the bloody sieges of those wars, led on the storming party, themselves headed by a small band of volunteers, chiefly composed of young men of family, and commanded by one of high promise, Vincent Bencio, fated to finish his short career that night, with many others of his gallant comrades. The German auxiliaries of Fronsberg, Alva's old regiment, called the Grenadiers of the Holy League, and the Walloon legion, at all

times fighting too well against their country's efforts for freedom, were the next in order of march; and all moved slowly and silently on, covered by a night of pitchy darkness.

They soon came to the foot of the ragged mound of rubbish which formed the base of the breach, and which had fallen, under the irresistible battering of thirty pieces of cannon, in masses that came almost close to the river's edge, and nearly touched on the ruins of the village. With cautious steps and groping hands the pioneers endeavoured to trace a path upwards over the crumbling obstructions; and the leading column of arquebusiers opened out in a line of twelve a-breast, and began steadily to mount. But the quick ears of the garrison heard the approaching sounds. A single musquet shot from the advanced sentinel gave the alarm; and in an instant the whole scene was in a blaze of various light. Every falconet and culverin previously brought to bear upon the breach was at once discharged, and the deep volley was accompanied by a burst of fireworks, that

illuminated the river, the castle, and even the distant camp, with a many coloured radiance.

The storming party thus exposed to the well-aimed discharges of musketry and cannon, now mounted with more rapid steps. Brave bosoms throbbed higher as the danger was more evident ; and any shrinking heart that wavered in the previous gloom now recovered its tone, as the dread of shame grew stronger than that of death. The dropping bodies of the killed and maimed added to the obstructions of the ascent, and were soon passed over or spurned aside, with as much indifference as the blocks of stone that encumbered the way ; and the blood, lying in pools or mixing with the pulverized masonry, splashed as the column moved forward, or formed a mortar slippery to the firmest feet.

Trovaldo, cased in complete steel, and mounted on his war horse, took his station at the end of the bridge nearest the camp, surrounded by his staff, and encouraging by the most inspiring words the soldiers as they defiled past him to the breach.

“The beggars* are well prepared,” cried he, as the first burst of artillery opened on his troops. “But they hold out a light to their own ruin. On, my brave friends! Such of ye as outlive this glorious night shall be loaded with honour and reward—those who die shall awake to-morrow in Heaven. His Holiness, the Pope, has sent us a general pardon for all sins!”

Again he cried, as he saw the gallant band of volunteers bounding lightly forward and springing across the shivered fragments of the wall,

“Glorious fellows, by St. Jago! Up, up to your knees in blood! To their heretic throats, in the name of the holy saints! Bravo, Bencio! Well done, Quinones! Now Arrighetto! Caravantes! Paceco! Brave hearts all!”

But these exclamations of involuntary praise and pious adjuration never reached the ears of the fine youths thus called over, as it were, from the

* The epithet *gueux* continued at this period to be given indiscriminately to all who opposed the Spanish tyranny.

muster roll of Fate. For one after another they fell, under the storm of shot poured from the defences above, ere they could cut a single throat for the sake of glory or religion. As Trovaldo marked them and many others struck down dead, or desperately wounded and still rushing forward in the frenzy of their courage, bursts of convulsive laughter and phrases of wild excitement told how the fight inflamed him to temporary madness.

“ Well jumped, by Heaven !” shouted he, as one poor fellow bounded up in the death-pang from a bullet piercing his brain.

“ Music, music for the dancers !” he cried again, as the clang of the swords and armour of those come to close quarters with the castle troops beat fierce time to the distorted motions of many who writhed with pain.

As the assailants in great numbers gained the utmost height of the breach they were met by resistance in every possible shape. Musketry, pikes, and swords, were aided by showers of stones,

hurled by the women from behind the palisades, and these Amazons used with great effect a missile well known in the wars of the time. This was a strong hoop of wood, studded inside with nails, and thickly covered with grenades and other preparations of fire works, which being flung among the groups as they scrambled up the breach, frequently caught some victims either singly or linked two or three together, and in all cases inflicted horrible burns and other wounds. Scalding water, too, was dashed in the faces of the foe ; and the hardy peasants, unused to the regular weapons of war, rushed to the fight with pitchforks, scythes, and even flails, and dealt out their blows with deadly yet ludicrous effect.

The scene in all its details highly excited the desperate ribaldry of Trovaldo ; and the soldiers, as they pushed forward themselves to share these very horrors, sent forth yells and laughs in chorus with their chieftain, denaturalized by his example, and seeming more demons than men. The work had gone on for a full hour since, all preliminary

impediments being cleared, the storming party had first made its footing in the breach. A dreadful carnage among them was as yet the only result. In addition to such instances of death as already related, we might almost borrow the quaint conceits of an old Italian writer in describing a similar scene, "It was frightful to see the state of the dying in the combat that still went on. The cannon tore away their heads, legs, and arms; and their members fiercely scattered round wounded the comrades by their side, who fell, as one might say, by the very hands of their friends. Others being cut across by the chain-shot, still fought, as it were, with one half of their bodies, and, in a manner, surviving themselves, bravely revenged the other half which they had lost."

The bravery of even the bravest began to flag, under the horror that surrounded them on all sides. A general stagnation took place in the living tide that had hitherto rushed upward. No man turned his back; but many, in hopeless ex-

haustion, stood still, to be shot at with a full front to the foe ; others sank down and looked sternly at the storm of missiles that came hissing on ; and some, bearing up the still palpitating bodies of the comrades who fell beside them, made a fleshy rampart under which to repose, till the order for retreat or a new impulse to attack might reach them.

Trovaldo's practised eye quickly perceived the hesitation, and his bold heart bounded to the remedy. He felt that not a moment was to be lost. Already two officers approached him, despatched by the colonels of the leading regiments to recommend a retreat. He heard the rising murmur breathed deeply through the ranks around him. Almost bursting with grief and anger, he cried at the utmost pitch of his voice,

“ Oh infamy ! Back to those coward colonels, and tell them at their peril to repeat their words. —On, Germans ! Forward, Walloons !—Spain and Italy turn recreant—Valdez and old Lombardy forget their ancient fame, and dare not drive a few famished rebels from yon ruin. Hurtado ! Ortiz !

Alvarada ! give me my buckler and my lance—I will be among them—on, on to the charge ! My blood shall redden the pale faces of these poltroons.”

With these words he clapped spurs to his horse, and was dashing into the midst of the soldiers who thronged the bridge, when two of the aids-de-camp, whom he had just named, seized his bridle at each side and forcibly held him back.

“ In the name of the whole army, of their highnesses, of the holy saints, forbear to expose your life, on which all of us depend !” exclaimed one of the officers ; and the nearest soldiers pressed round, joining loud prayers that Don Juan would run no risk, and calling out to their officers to lead them on to the breach.

“ No, no, by Heaven !” cried he, “ it shall never be said that Juan de Trovaldo hung back, while cowards hesitated or brave men asked to be led on. Make way ! Forward to the charge !”

And he again drove his knightly spurs up to their rowels in the horse’s flanks, and turning

aside from the crowded bridge, he forced him into the river. The noble animal, by successive plunges and some swimming, soon gained the opposite bank ; the mass of the soldiers the while moving along the bridge, and shouting like savages rushing on their prey. Trovaldo now flung himself from his horse, drew his long rapier, ran his arm through the leathern thongs of a round, spiked shield, such as were sometimes carried by officers as lately as those days, and snatching a standard of green silk, which bore a cross embroidered in gold, and the celebrated motto

“ *In hoc signo vici Turcas ; in hoc vincam Hereticos,*”

he waved it high over his head, and rapidly ascended the breach. The impulse given by his conduct was irresistible. The wavering and the daring followed it alike. National distinctions were lost in the general rush, and in as short a space as could by possibility suffice, Trovaldo, supported by his troops, had cleared the first

palisade, driven back its defenders, and placed the standard of Spain on one of its highest points.

At the earliest moment of alarm, Count Ivon was standing alone and in darkness, at the low arched entrance of the undermost vault. He once more distinguished the voices of Lyderic and Spinelli as they entered the mine above ; and he caught enough of their conversation to know that it was not intended to be finally sprung, until Trovaldo's assault against the breach had been tried, and, as he thought them to say, until it had *failed*. He did not pause to catch more of what sounded so like treachery to their chief. He had heard sufficient to satisfy him that *his* time for action was not come ; but warned by the hollow echoings of the cannonnade that the attack was begun, he cautiously threaded the upward windings, feeling the particular notches in the wall which served to guide the initiated in their secret ways. He was soon in the castle courts, calmly directing the various means of defence, and seeing that they were not pushed too far to interfere with his final plans.

The early resistance to the storming already described had cost the defenders but little. Fighting under cover, and with every advantage, but few men were killed. When, however, Trovaldo's desperate assault so far succeeded, the case was different. The assailants bore down all before them, and slaughtered indiscriminately soldiers and peasants, men and women. Don Diego Leonis, who had commanded the defence, was severely wounded, and borne away much against his will, exclaiming loudly that "from that moment the troops of the tyrants had gained the breach, his feet had not once touched the ground, but trod solely on the bodies of the enemies who fell by his single hand." The Scotch captain, now promoted to the rank of major by Count Ivon, subject to confirmation by Prince Maurice and the States General of Holland, took the command; but despite his steady courage and keen sense of duty, his troops gradually gave way, and as they fell

back, step by step, loud murmurs broke from them, and a general cry was sent out for De Bassenveldt, as if he alone could stem the tide that was bearing them down.

And at the call, as if conjured up by magic, De Bassenveldt was suddenly on the spot, followed by the rallying bands that had first given way, and accompanied by an appearance which raised their courage and confidence to the most fanatic height. For the many straining eyes that gazed on the scene, saw nothing less than the embodied figure of that portrait of René the Wizard, with which all were so familiar, his helmet and armour glistening bright as his cloak flew aside, a white wand waving in one hand, a rapier wielded in the other, and fury, which to the beholders seemed much more than mortal, darting from his eyes.

The effect of this apparition was not more inspiring to the superstition of the garrison troops than it was appalling to that of the enemy's. Strange rumours of the " Wizard Count " had

early penetrated into the besieging camp, and Count Ivon's present alliance with his ancestor's ghost was as little doubted by his terrified foes as it was thoroughly believed by his own followers. Nothing was more usual at the time than to ascribe any action out of the common run of events to supernatural aid. It was not merely Martin Delrio, so often quoted by Father Jerome, and his like that maintained the doctrine, but grave historians as well.* To such spectators then as now battled together on the breach of Welbasch Castle the effects of the appearance we have described may be imagined; nor did the desperate blows dealt by a well nerved arm raise a question among them as to the spectral agency by which they were wrought. The wild shouts of the garrison, proclaiming the presence of

* Strada ascribes to the actual assistance of demons the celerity with which the Iconoclasts of Antwerp destroyed the images and ornaments of the celebrated cathedral of that town in 1556, as well as the destruction of the bridge at the subsequent siege of that city; and he concurs in Delrio's account of the apparition of Pierre de Paz's ghost hereafter alluded to by Trovaldo.

their awful ally, and joining together the names of Ivon and René in stunning sounds, produced in their just then victorious enemies, a panic almost inconceivable in rational men. They, whom neither blade nor bullet could appal or turn from the path of duty, now shewed their backs, and all shamefully fled. Even Trovaldo slowly measured back his steps, retreating, but still disdaining to turn ; and even, though his hair stood erect from fright, parrying the thrusts and warding off the blows aimed at him by an arm which he would not believe to be human. The first line of defence was again recovered, the breach cleared of the assailants, and the Spanish colours torn from their place and trampled under foot. But as the discomfited besiegers retired, they were not followed by the garrison. De Bassenveldt's strict commands restrained them within the line of the palisades ; and when the run-aways ventured to look up again from the foot of the breach, they saw no enemy save the terrific representant of Count René the Wizard, fitfully

revealed by the flashing blazes of the cannon, and standing at the top in an attitude of victorious pride.

Crest-fallen and disheartened, Trovaldo stood at the foot of the breach, unable to stop the flight of his soldiers, who now rushed impetuously towards the camp, their present disorder forming a wild contrast to their late compact array. While he stood, leaning on his rapier and listlessly stroking his beard, an officer of engineers, despatched by Lyderic, approached him and announced that every thing was now ready for springing the mine, and requesting his presence on the spot.

“The mine!” exclaimed he, starting and looking round, “true, by my saint! I had forgotten it quite, in the bloody business yonder. And is it come to this? Driven from the open breach by some phantom of hell, and forced at last to underground cunning, like gnomes or coal-diggers! Well, be it so! Let’s to this mine! I remember when the heretics and their legion of

fiends blew up the great bridge at Antwerp with their fire ships, Alexander of Parma, my glorious commander, was forced to confess that one miner was worth ten soldiers. Come on then, to this mine of Baron Roulemonde's—the glory is after all reserved for him and Spinelli—if, indeed, the devil that fights for these rebels be not too strong for all their brimstone. Come on, Hurtado !”

He then followed the engineer with his only remaining aid-de-camp, Ortiz having been just killed, and Alvarada desperately wounded by his side. Several other officers accompanied the general, while others recovering from their panic, by degrees succeeded in rallying their scattered regiments, and forming them in readiness for whatever might be resolved on as soon as the mine exploded.

Lyderic, who had anxiously watched the results of the assault, was rejoiced at all that had taken place. When he saw Trovaldo rushing into the dangers of the breach, he fervently hoped that he could not escape the death he seemed to court.

Had he fallen there, Lyderic's first object had been gained without the necessity of a crime. Had that been the success of the assault, he would then have ordered the mine to be sprung, and so created a terrible diversion in favour of the storming party ; for he was sure that the result of the explosion must be the ruin of the whole line of rampart under which the excavations extended ; and a consequent exposure to attack which the garrison could not possibly resist. But Trovaldo's triumph was the last of his wishes. He therefore watched and waited, in anxious observation of the event, and when he saw that the general and his successful troops were in their turn repulsed, he smiled for joy. He still hoped that some random shot or stroke would lay Trovaldo low, and raise himself to the supreme command.. But when he found that he had escaped the death which so many around him met, he then, as on a former occasion in the case of De Bassenveldt, endeavoured to satisfy himself that fate had doomed his

victim to the particular mode of destruction he had prepared for him.

“ Well, Baron Roulemonde, I am here at your summons. Since fair fighting has no chance, we must try foul. Faugh ! what a filthy stench comes from this damnable place. This is not like the genuine smell of powder—and these black faced fellows ? Are they soldiers ? They look as though they wore masks in very shame of their dark doings. But never mind ! What is now to be done ? ”

Such were Trovaldo's words on entering the mouth of the deep cavity through which Spinelli's scientific operations were approached.

“ Don Juan, I am glad to see you here,” said Lyderic, “ your presence is necessary to sanction our works.”

“ Go on, go on, Baron Roulemonde—take your own course. I am as nothing now. *I* cannot cope with demons or magicians—they require other opponents than a plain soldier and a sharp sword. Do as you like in this extremity.”

“Come, general, this tone of sarcasm and despondency is not fitting the occasion. We must try all means against the foe, nor believe them aught than mere mortals like ourselves. I am grieved to see you quail before a contemptible trick. I know De Bassenveldt well—and I scorn this masquerade of magic, which some one of his trained creatures has so well acted. Our soldiers must be disabused, and led again to the breach. At the same moment with their next attack, we will here fire the train, and at one crash lay open a wide way into the very heart of the castle, which must then infallibly be ours. Cheer up, Don Juan! Send out orders for a fresh assault—you see the troops are rallying—and then just enter here with me and Spinelli, and approve the means which you will see to be irresistible.”

“I understand not these doings, although I have fought within mines ere now—witness the memorable attack of Maëstricht, where Fabio Farnese, Mondragon and myself battled two hours

in the underground works, as though in our very graves. But I have no skill to judge these things. They are your and Spinelli's doing—let the merit be between ye !”

“ What will you do then, Don Juan ? Will you again put yourself at the head of the troops, and lead to the assault ? ”

“ I'll fight no more—I feel my spirit weighed down. It was not, by heavens, a mortal munmer that drove me back just now, and withered me with those looks ! No, no, it was a ghost, as sure as that of my old comrade Pierre de Paz, which fought for two hours on the dyke of Covensteyn, six months after I saw him killed at Tenermonde. Take all upon yourself—issue what orders you like—you have my authority for whatever you deem it well to do.”

“ Quick, then, to the leaders of your columns ! ” cried Lyderic to the several officers near him ; “ let the trumpets sound a charge—let them advance once more ! Once lodged within the breach, the mine shall be instantly sprung, and

then a general rush into the wide chasm, and all must be ours !”

A loud flourish of trumpets awoke again the courage of the troops. The officers, taking their cue from Lyderic, soon spread the belief that it was a mere man who had acted the part of the Wizard Spectre ; and the soldiers, burning with mingled shame and rage, advanced to the breach, with loud oaths of vengeance against every mortal within the castle walls. Then Lyderic exclaimed—

“ Let the miners now withdraw, and every man stand to his arms, beyond the covered galleries. No harm can come to any, if each takes the post assigned him. Steadiness and regularity ensure the safety of all.”

The whole body of workmen now withdrew by the different passages—Lyderic’s words of command and caution were whispered along the lines, as they were silently formed in imagined security. An awful pause took place without the mine. Within it, a brief scene of treachery and violence was acted.

“ Now, Don Juan, all is ready,” said Lyderic, “ the troops march bravely to the assault—the workmen and pioneers are in their places—we are all prepared for the final moment. And now you will not, you must not, refuse to look on the admirable arrangements within. Our good Spinelli here, would be in despair were all to be blown in air, without your eye bearing witness to works on which his future reputation is to rest.”

“ Surely, my noble general, you will not refuse me the favour of inspecting for an instant the labours to which I was stimulated by the hope of your approval, and on which the whole prospects of my career depend,” chimed in the Italian.

“ Nay, worthy Signor Spinelli, if your mine does its work, and blows these ramparts to atoms, it carries its own certificate of good conduct, and your warrant of promotion.”

“ But my pride, my glory, is in my general’s approbation.”

“ Spinelli, you know full well how I abhor these secret works. So did Alexander of Parma,

my master and model in all that I know or wish to know of war. Tambelli, Toralli, Barochio, and all the rest of your engineers never stood in his favour so high as a simple pikeman. Nor do you in mine, worthy Spinelli—but I will not refuse a glance at your works, since your heart seems so set on it. Whither must I go, in these dark windings?”

“This way, my gracious general; your courteous words gladden my heart,” said the engineer, cringing low, and holding up his lanthorn, which was constructed so as to give light without danger.

“Steady, Spinelli! Remember Vitelli!” muttered Lyderic, in the sepulchral voice of treachery and death. At this signal, previously agreed on, the engineer closed his lanthorn and pretended to stumble.

“How now!” exclaimed Trovaldo, stopping short, as he found himself in utter darkness, “let’s leave this loathsome place! Back, back, I say! Who presses me on?”

“ Now, now, Spinelli ! down with him ! ” cried Lyderic ; and before their victim could utter another exclamation, the conspirators shoved him from the narrow passage into one of the cavities which they had destined for his tomb ; and they in an instant shut the ponderous cover which was ready at their hand for the occasion.

“ Quick, quick to the mouth of the mine ! ” mutually exclaimed the murderers ; and as they gained the outlet, while the Italian re-opened his lantern, Lyderic seized the match that lay at his hand, and prepared to light it. But he was anticipated in the intended consummation of his desperate deed. While he was in the very act of placing the match to catch the spark of light, Spinelli holding the lantern towards him, and both trembling in the terror of their half accomplished crime, a crash as if heaven and earth had met together—a shock as though the world was rent asunder—deprived them at once of sense and motion, and flung them amidst a mass of overwhelming ruin.

No sooner had Trovaldo been repulsed from his

lodgement in the defences of the breach, than Count Ivon began to put into execution his measures for the evacuation of the castle. The principal body of his mounted soldiers, who had not been engaged in the conflict, were all in readiness to file out through the eastern portal. The peasants of both sexes, who had so well done their duty during the assault, were placed on foot in the centre of the dragoons. A few carts were also stationed there, loaded with awful burdens of women and wounded men. The hostage Provost of Flanders, who had quite recovered from his barbarous treatment at the hands of the picaroons, was also in this station of greatest safety, together with Father Jerome, Nona, Trinettes, and various other members of the household. The baggage attempted to be carried away was little or nothing. Some of the family records, under the care of Paul Cuyper, formed the entire property belonging to De Bas-senveldt. In resolving to fire with his own hand the train that was to destroy his last remnant of

earthly possessions, no alloy of petty avarice mixed with his heroism; nor would he encumber the chances of safety to the beings in his care, by any selfish efforts in which he alone was to benefit. He resolved to start with them in this desperate venture in a perfect equality of ruin. His horse and his arms formed his whole personal stock.

Theresa and Beatrice had been together during the whole of the preceding evening and throughout this perilous night. The vigilance of De Bas-senveldt was not to be deceived; and though the assault was only promised for the morrow, he resolved that every thing should be ready for it come when it might, for he felt thoroughly the just maxim of war, "that it is better to be beaten than surprised." Beatrice had therefore, by Count Ivon's desire, prepared Theresa for the intended evacuation of the castle; but to avoid any premature alarm or unnecessary shock, he had strictly prohibited her speaking of the desperate and wholesale measure of revenge on which he had resolved. It was part of the plan of tactics

which he had adopted towards Theresa that she should hear from himself alone the full extent of his destitution, for he had a fierce pride in the intention of revealing himself to her and claiming her for his own, at the very moment when he had but himself to offer to her; and he had fixed with Beatrice and her brother the point for his meeting them on their simultaneous escape from the abandoned walls. Theresa was soon equipped in a riding suit constructed by the united ingenuity of Nona and herself; Beatrice in her male habit of grey kersey, but disencumbered of the plates of armour in which she was wont to appear in the sorties and skirmishes which had taken place during the siege. The horses meant for the service of the two friends were ready at the point from which their departure was to take place. This was a small postern gate which opened upon the moat under the castle's northern side, and from which a narrow causeway communicated with the eastern portal whence the main body of the garrison was to escape. At the little postern

in question the Moriscoe was stationed, attended by a stout dragoon in charge of the horses, while he, in pursuance of previous arrangement, passed continually between this post and De Bassenveldt's varied stations in the castle, to keep the communication clear, and receive his final signal for departure.

The Moriscoe came also frequently to his sister with the intelligence of what was going on ; but Theresa involuntarily shrunk away from his approach. She could not overcome her repugnance to him. She remembered his yet unexplained share in the circumstances which had betrayed her into De Bassenveldt's power, and she could only regard him, notwithstanding his various feats of courage, as the deceiver of Lambert Boonen, and the ready instrument of his formidable rival, to whose service he had so deeply devoted himself. Delicacy had all along prevented her from expressing this dislike to Beatrice. She had strictly avoided the mention of her brother's name ; and now, at this final moment, she would have sunk

under the apprehension of his sinister protection, had not her reliance on Lambert Boonen's promised co-operation with young Claassen upheld her, with all the vague but potent agency of hope. And in spite of the increasing horrors of her situation, she felt a buoyant presentiment of good, a foretaste of love and liberty, that rose like the refreshing breeze which precedes a storm.

In this mood she witnessed almost the entire of those fierce events which have been faintly described. Familiar now with scenes and sounds of battle, she could not resist the impulse that prompted her to gaze on their continual recurrence; and no sooner had the outburst of brilliancy illumined the horrors of the assault, than she hurried to a station overlooking the whole, which she viewed with the breathless interest of a witness, while Beatrice, by her side, sympathized in it with all the intenseness of an actor. But there was a motive stronger than curiosity, or the mere force of habit, which urged on Theresa on these occasions, and fixed her eyes on scenes which

made her heart sicken. That was the undefinable delight of witnessing the constant exertion of De Bassenveldt's prowess, which had been almost daily displayed. And she was always sure to know where danger and glory were the nearest, by the waving of his peculiar plume, which she had long learned to consider as the symbol of both. And now in this most desperate of all the scenes she had witnessed, throbbing and panting with the fluctuation of the fight, like a vessel that warps and bends with every heave of the waves on which it is tossed, she again saw Count Ivon's jet black plume, as he rushed to the breach. She gazed, too, with speechless wonder on the well recognised figure of René the Wizard. She saw Trovaldo and his troops driven back ingloriously; then, by a strange discrepancy of feelings, not incompatible with the best regulated minds, her strongest emotion was one of mixed regret and shame, that Lambert Boonen was not a partaker in the scene, his total absence from which had been, a few mo-

ments before, her most fervent hope. Then a wild mixture of fears for his safety—suspicions of the Moriscoe—doubts of De Bassenveldt—uncertainty even as to Beatrice, rushed upon her.

“Now, now Theresa!” exclaimed the latter, “the moment is at length arrived. I see Count Ivon has commanded the retreat. The main body of the troops begin to move. The crisis of escape is at hand. Here comes my brother to lead us to the north postern. Come, my dear friend—we have no time to lose.”

Theresa felt her lips parched, as she strove to reply. She could not utter a word; but mechanically moved on with Beatrice, following the Moriscoe, who led the way, by the great stair, and through the vaulted corridors that stretched along by the kitchens, then into a subterranean way that passed under a small court-yard, communicated with some of the rampart galleries, and finally opened out at the little postern before mentioned. These various passages were partially lighted by torches stuck at

intervals in the walls. The way was smooth, and the air came freely in, from loopholes and casements cut in the gallery. They had nearly completed the route ere Theresa recovered the power of speech; but at length she suddenly stopped, and grasped forcibly the hand of Beatrice, who walked close before her. She sat down on one of the benches cut in the rock, for the occasional repose of the musqueteers by whom the line of galleries was so often occupied.

“ Stop, Beatrice,” said she, in a decisive tone; “ we go too fast. I must still be assured of the only condition on which my life is worth preserving. Where is Master Boonen? I have his sacred promise to be with me at the moment of escape. It is come—but he is not here! You know all that affects him—that urges him to keep his word—that disables him from doing so. Where is he—why is he not here?”

“ Good heavens, Theresa, is it at a moment like this you stop for such vain questions? On, on to the postern! your friend will meet you

there — be assured — be satisfied — all will be well !”

“ Oh, Beatrice, I cannot till I see him. My heart sinks within me—may I trust you ?”

“ Can you doubt me ? Poor girl, what a fine web of suspense and suffering is spun round thee ! would I might at once snap it—but the moment is at hand—come on, come on !”

Theresa was reassured more by the tone of sincerity than the words just uttered. There was, too, an air of compassion (which always implies authority) in Beatrice’s manner that produced its momentary effect. She took her proffered hand, rose from her seat, and walked on ; and as they proceeded she heard the rushing sounds of the crowd that quitted the castle walls, and the tramping of the horses’ feet in the court-yard above. In a little more, the chilly air through the opened postern broke on her face, and she saw by the light thrown out from the nearest torch, the dark waters of the moat spangled by a reflection of a few stars, and the thick crop of weeds and rushes

waving in the breeze. As she followed Beatrice out of the arched aperture, she saw the horses standing ready caparisoned. Another quick glance shewed the soldier-attendant, whom she was prepared to expect, and the Moriscoe, who held forth his hand as if to assist her to mount. But she vainly sought him for whom alone her eyes were open, for whose presence her heart bounded.

“Beatrice,” said she, “he is not here!”

“Dearest Theresa, let thy doubts be tranquilized. I swear to thee that all is right. Mount thy horse, and let us join the rest—I hear them defiling from the portal yonder.”

“Come, lady,” said the Moriscoe, “you endanger your own safety, and the happiness of all most dear to you by delay. To horse, to horse!”

With these words she stepped forward, and Theresa’s fears told her he meant to seize and force her away. The effect of fear that shews a positive danger is to add force to a strong mind, in the same proportion as that which is vague unnerves it. Theresa, convinced that she was on the

point of being irretrievably torn from her lover, if she did not exert her utmost energy, stepped back into the postern, and exclaimed to Beatrice, who implored her to depart,

“ Never ! never will I stir from these walls till I see Lambert Boonen in safety. *He* is the dearest object to me on earth. I will not abandon him. If all were fair and right he would be here. But if he be basely left to the enemy’s power, I will share his fate—I return to the castle !”

“ Theresa, Theresa !” cried Beatrice, following her quickened pace, and catching her gently by the arm, “ you know not the destruction you are courting—Oh, come, come to liberty and happiness ! I swear to you once more your lover will meet you by and bye—will snatch you from these doubts and terrors—come, come !”

“ Beatrice, I am resolved ! I have no confidence but in him—this is a moment too perilous to stand on points of courtesy. I must see him, or I stir not !”

“ Oh, heavens ! what a scene of child’s play is

this for two women to act, at a time when heroes might tremble and turn pale! What can I do? Why may I not act for myself? How persuade her to her own safety and happiness?"

Beatrice uttered these words with a startling veracity of tone. She seemed overwhelmed with agitation.

"Yes," exclaimed she again, after a pause of fixed thought, "that will do—there may yet be time—come this way then, Theresa! Follow me fast and firmly—you *shall* be satisfied—you shall see your lover—he shall accompany you. Quick, quick, to the Wizard's Tower! And now, Alla! now, holy Prophet! to ye and the destiny taught me by your sacred creed I commit myself."

Beatrice, seizing a torch from the wall, led on, Theresa rapidly following, urged forward by an impulse of uncalculating delight. Her heart throbbed as she hurried on, and she seemed to herself scarcely to touch the earth. She saw that the whole line of corridors, kitchens, and stairs, by which they passed, were quite deserted. But

the figure of Lambert Boonen seemed every where visible, and the whole scene was populous with imagined multiplications of him.

They at length reached the great lobby, and entered by the main folding-doors the memorable picture gallery. In spite of her excitement, Theresa felt a shudder at the memory of her last visit there. With half-closed eyes, looking neither to right or left, she followed Beatrice's steps. When they had reached nearly the further end of the gallery the latter stopped suddenly at the foot of the little stair leading to the tower.

“ Now, Theresa,” said she, “ I leave you for a moment to tell him you wait. He shall be with you presently, to lead you away. You shall not have three minutes more suspense. But think not of me—ask no questions—call not for light—he knows the path—time flies ; I will be at the postern as soon as you.”

With these hastily spoken words she sprang up the winding stair, and Theresa found herself in instant and utter darkness. The sounds of the

cannon had entirely ceased. There was not a whisper to be heard. The sudden silence and darkness, and the forms of hideous phantasy that at once seemed crowding on her, caused a terror too great to bear. She rushed up the winding stair, and seemed to catch new life as the gleam of the torch appeared from an open door above. In an instant more she gained the turn that gave a full view of the little chamber within, and she nearly sank from a new pang of joy, on seeing the object of all her anxiety in the act of hasty equipment. The well known beaver hat placed on the head, the oft observed camlet cloak clasped round the throat, the twisted handled rapier, caught up suddenly for instant departure, were tokens sufficient for Theresa. At once brought to a sense of courage and shame, she turned quickly, and retraced her steps to the bottom of the stair, shocked even then by an instinct of mingled modesty and pride, at being detected by Lambert Boonen in a movement that could only

have sprung from indelicate intrusion, or degrading fear.

Lightened of a load of dread, she reached the gallery, and she turned back to catch the sound of her lover's foot, or the sight of his form, descending to join her in the flight which now had no terrors for her. As she looked and listened, a horrid sound broke on her, accompanied by a burst of lurid and almost blinding light. The windows of the gallery were shattered to atoms, and the solid frames dashed inwards. The walls and floor reeled and quivered. A quick succession of noises, resembling the first, but not so terribly fierce, and boundings of the whole building, as if some huge animal shook it with gigantic force, filled the next few seconds. Theresa felt an intolerable sickness and agony; sense seemed annihilated, yet instinct impelled her towards the wide gap where the window had been; and her eye-balls seemed to crack as she saw the tower close by totter and roll from side to side, and then fall in a thousand frag-

ments. Through a wide rent of the riven wall she saw the form that embodied all her soul's devotion, with out-stretched arms, sinking and catching for safety at the very fragments of ruin that came dashing down; and while she thus stood gazing in the full consciousness of her agony, a cloud of sulphureous vapour steamed up, and would have suffocated her had not the first instinct of life driven her away. She turned and fled, lighted by the rapid flashes that poured into the gallery with a new succession of explosions; and as she ran along, the floor undulated and the walls heaved, and the huge portraits shook and rattled, like forest branches in a storm gust.

Theresa, rushing forward, by no motion of the will, but in mechanical obedience to the great law of Nature, which commands self-preservation, retraced the way she had so lately traversed. She never stopped till she was at the farthest end of the subterranean passages, and almost close to the little postern gate. The first return of sensation was from fresh terror at seeing the Moriscoe, with

wild and haggard looks, rushing in and coming towards her. She shrank into a nook, and he passed without seeing her. A brother's fears had sent his looks straight forward, and made them dull to the observance of aught but the dear loved sister whom he ran to seek. When he passed, as a vollied steam of smoke poured along the gallery, Theresa sprang away again, and in an instant more she sank, in an agony worse than death, on the little causeway that stretched from the postern across the moat.

Here she became wide awake to the vivid sense of what had in the moment of action appeared a hideous dream ; the whole of the terrible scene was again before her, and she screamed in hysteric terror. Through the heavy smoke that rolled upwards, broad flashes of light were at every moment thrown from blazing rafters and the combustibles flung forth in the conflagration. Successive reports from single pieces of artillery, self-discharged as the fire came on them, sounded

like signal guns from the engulfed and sinking fortress. The horrid sounds of pain, fear, and death, sent out from hundreds of victims, defy the pen and the imagination both.

Theresa distinctly saw the soldier who had been left with the horses, scrambling from the moat, into which he had either fallen or been cast by the concussion, while the terrified animals plunged in the water or galloped furiously along the sloping bank. In the distance was the whole body of the fugitive garrison hurrying rapidly from the outer defences of the place, and last of all, urging on the rest by gestures of persuasion and command, and occasionally throwing his head backwards, as if gazing on the frightful desolation he fled from, Theresa distinguished the figure of De Bassenveldt, his horse Rolando bounding and plunging under him, as if impatient to bear him from the horrid scene. This view of De Bassenveldt, who *now* had no rival to dread, brought with it that first thought, and then a paroxysm of woe. Theresa turned her head away, and

again she screamed unconsciously, and it was only an innate dignity of spirit that saved her from the extravagant gestures and exclamations that weak and vulgar natures find relief in at such moments. She neither tore her hair nor beat her breast, but she sat on the cold earth, grasping it with convulsive snatchings, and gazing with complete despair as if into a mirror that reflected the whole depth of her misery.

While she thus sat, statue-like, but in the clearest possession of intellect, she saw two figures hurrying towards her, in the opposite direction to that from which she had turned. She immediately knew them to be Renault Claassen and Jans Brocklaer. Their approach caused her no emotion whatever, nor did she attempt to move or speak. Claassen ran rapidly across the narrow causeway and stooped down close to her. He was pale and trembling. His first words were uttered almost breathlessly.

“Heaven be praised, she is safe! But he—where is he? Why is not Master Boonen here?”

A low, yet piercing scream was his only answer. “Oh, Heavens! What does that sound of woe betoken!” exclaimed he; “where, oh where is he?”

“Beneath yonder ruins!” uttered Theresa, in a tone of fixed anguish that made the compassionate youth shudder; but he did not want a due power of exertion in a case of extremity. The feeling that bore him through the perils he had just surmounted to the appointed place of meeting, to labour for her safety, gave him now the faculty of decision. He promptly desired Brocklaer, who obeyed in speechless terror, to seize one of the nearest horses, which was the one prepared for Theresa. Then advancing close to her, he raised her from the ground, with a steadiness and strength that amazed him; for ever till that moment the very thought of touching the hem of her garment with his finger’s point used to throw him into a tremor.

“You will entrust yourself to my care—you will fly with me from the horrors of this place?”

said Renault, in the accent that is sure to find its way to the hearer's confidence. Theresa rose up, assentingly, but she did not, she *could* not speak.

“ Let me implore you to mount this horse,” continued he, “ there is yet a moment's chance of escape—*but* a moment, for if De Roulemonde survives, or De Bassenveldt seeks you, either way you are lost.”

At the mention of each of those names, Theresa thrilled with dread.

“ I give myself wholly to your care,” said she, “ you are now my best, my only friend !”

These words were followed by another of those convulsive, imperfect screams, which few may have heard in real agony, but which those have shuddered at and *must* remember, who have seen, in parts of impassioned anguish, the one exquisite actress whom Ireland had the pride of giving to the stage and still possesses in private life. At the same instant, Theresa grasped young Claassen's hand, with a truth of wretchedness that for-

got the cold forms of decorum, and, if it had remembered, would have scorned them.

In a few minutes the fugitives had passed the causeway, and Theresa's bridle being held at each side by her devoted attendants, they led her to the leftward, down towards the river's edge. Claassen knew his path well, or he could not have kept it safely in the thick darkness of the smoke that rolled from the ruined castle, making darker the depth of shade under which they wound along.

Scarcely had they set out and turned their backs upon the scene, when a horseman came along the raised chaussée above the moat at full speed. It was De Bassenveldt. Had there been any beholders they might have marked under his open casque a face of terrible anxiety; but his looks were only met by the stillness of desolation. He galloped across the causeway, threw himself from his horse, approached the postern, through which a dense volume of smoke rolled out, and he loudly called on Beatrice and the Moriscoe, and the

deep echoes of the gallery answered hollowly to the sounds. He then examined the earth for traces of those he sought, and while he discovered from the deep hoof-marks that the horses had there struck their feet in violent and sudden movement, he caught a view of the soldier, labouring at some distance down to recover his charger, which still plunged through the entanglement of the weeds.

Count Ivon sprung into his saddle, and approaching the soldier, immediately recognised him as the Moriscoe's companion.

“Speak at once, quickly, truly!” cried De Bassenveldt. “Where are the others—where the lady—what has become of them—of her?”

“Most noble colonel!” exclaimed the still affrighted Walloon, “it must be the devil that has played us this trick! it was the arch-fiend himself in the form of the Wizard Count.”

“Villain!” cried the furious De Bassenveldt, raising his sword, “do you dare to mock me! Where is the lady? Answer, or—”

“Why, colonel! Count Ivon! What the fiend would you do? Don’t you remember me—Bastan?”

“God, must I endure this agony!—Wretch!—Good fellow! Bastan! Yes I know you, well, very well—for God’s love tell me where is the lady?”

“Colonel, I scarcely know where I am myself—I tumbled into the moat, and scrambled out again—how, Heaven can tell—but I can’t. And this unlucky beast, you see—”

De Bassenveldt caught the pummel of his saddle with both hands, and groaned from mental torture.

“Well may you groan, my colonel, for, if I judge aright, that hell-burst has not left one stone of the castle standing on another. Saint Jacob! What a crash it was!”

“Bastan!” cried De Bassenveldt, in a tone of desperation, “take this rapier and plunge it into my throat!”

“The saints forbid!” said the soldier, stepping

back, crossing himself, and putting his hands behind his back.

“ You are giving me a worse death, Bastan ! If you would not drive me mad, tell me what has become of the lady, of Beatrice, of the Moriscoe ? ”

“ May I die, colonel, if I well know—my brain is confused—but I saw them, one after another, run back through the postern gate.”

“ Gracious Heavens ! ” murmured Count Ivon.

“ And soon afterwards, just as the earthquake tossed us all about, me and the horses, and flung some of us into the mud, which it was hard work to get clear of, just then, or it might be before or after—for my head is reeling yet—I saw the lady rush out again alone, and throw herself on the earth yonder.”

“ Ha ! where ? ” cried De Bassenveldt, ready to dart away.

“ Why, close by the little postern—but hold, colonel, you need not start off there again, for she is gone clear away ! ”

“Gone! Go on, go on! tell me all, in Heaven’s name!”

“I know no more to tell you, count, but that I saw two men lift the lady on a horse, and lead her away.”

De Bassenveldt grasped his throat, as if to make a clear passage for the almost suffocating rush of joy. He could not utter a word—but he *felt* a deep prayer in his very heart.

“Which way are they gone, good Bastan?” were his next words.

“Nay, that I know not, colonel—”

“And I care not!” said Count Ivon. “She is safe, she is safe! Up, Bastan, and away! We must follow them—down the lane of maples, and across the little birch wood—that must be their path—keep close to me!”

As De Bassenveldt gave the reins to Rolando, and the soldier pushed on his horse up the jagged banks of the chaussée, a straggling discharge of musquetry broke on them to the right.

“Hark!” said De Bassenveldt, “our fine fellows are forcing the enemy’s line of blockade!”—

And in the next instant, Gallagher, close followed by a dragoon, galloped up, calling loudly on Count Ivon.

“Colonel, colonel ! Count Ivon ! Hold, stop, for the love of Christ, don’t run away ! In spite of their fright at the blowing up, the enemy are opposing our passage !”

“Run away !” echoed De Bassenveldt—a rush of angry valour even at that moment mantling to his brow, and superseding every other passion. “List to me, Gallagher ! Theresa is before us, on this very path—pursue with these two men, and lead her back—bring her to me—I shall halt at the windmill till you join me—and let it be safe and soon !”

“And Beatrice, colonel ?”

“Ask me not—I dread to know the truth of her !” Ivon turned his horse’s head and galloped back in the direction of the firing, while Gallagher and the two soldiers pursued their way down the lane, with the best speed they might venture to put forth in its pitchy darkness.

CHAPTER III.

LYDERIC DE ROULEMONDE, with better fortune than many a better man, escaped totally unhurt from the catastrophe which had hurled so many of his fellow soldiers to destruction, inflicted horrid wounds on others, deprived some of sight, some of hearing, and caused to almost all within its reach sufferings from the contemplation of which the mind recoils. De Bassenveldt's calculation was tremendously accurate. The rocky basement of the ancient pile was upturned to its very heart. The Wizard's Tower at one extremity, and the

Turk's-head bastion at the other, with the whole intervening space of rampart, were utterly destroyed, and the huge body of building in some parts rent open, in all shaken, cracked, and prepared for the ruin which the desolating blasts of a few winters completed, but whose records still live in the moss-covered and weather-stained fragments that mark its site.

The loss of the enemy was immense. The choicest of the besieging troops, and almost all the chief officers who had crowded to the breach, or peopled the mines, were included in the shock. Death came among them in an appalling variety of shapes. Some were at once consumed by fire ; some smothered, while their bodies remained whole ; others forced high into air, scattered into atoms, or dashed to pieces by rugged masses of stone. Here wretches were buried alive in earthen graves, and there crushed by a weight of monumental rock. The escapes were in many instances miraculous. Not a few were swept upwards, and whirled to great distances, like chaff before the

wind, falling safely on the ground, or in the river. Many more stood stunned in their places, but unmoved and uninjured in the very midst of the fierce tempest ; and some were held harmless, by projecting blocks, shaken from their old positions into others of safe refuge for those to whom they seemed to threaten instant destruction. Among these latter was Lyderic. Though stunned and stupified for a while, yet he recovered himself one of the first, and he crawled from his position at what had been the entrance of the mine, to gaze on a chaos and a Golgotha combined.

As soon as returning perception allowed him to gather the reality of what had happened, and to comprehend his own safety, a gnawing solicitude arose to ascertain that Trovaldo and Spinelli—his victim and his accomplice—were both destroyed. Of this he was soon satisfied. A crushed and scarcely recognizable corpse lay close to his foot—but the blaze of the burning castle enabled the keen eye of villainy to see that it was that of the wily engineer, who had so readily joined in his

crime, and was already gone to meet its reward. A few paces distant the granite bosom of the mine, bared to its greatest depth, shewed him the particular spot chosen for Trovaldo's tomb, split and shivered to pieces, and untenanted but by some fragments of dress and decorations, that hung here and there on the scattered remains of limbs and flesh which had so lately formed the person of the bold but remorseless Don Juan. A chain of gold, bearing the medallion of the Golden Fleece, hung to parts of a shattered cuirass. Lyderic seized it, and threw it round his own neck; and his hard heart, even then, throbbed with a pleased movement against the bauble of dignity which seemed a token of his coming greatness.

When he felt that he might safely emerge from the place, and that the clouds of smoke and dust in some measure cleared away, he stepped forth, but stopped suddenly, transfixed by the sight of the desolation around him. The huge walls, and towers, and battlements, laid low; heaps of unshapely rubbish, where the regular and high-

wrought labours of architecture had but a moment before so proudly stood ; space, vagueness, and exposure, at once superseding the visible forms of power and strength—all this combination of material sublimity struck even Lyderic with immediate awe. But he was totally dead to the moral grandeur of the spectacle, which would have raised a purer mind above the sphere of mere human wonder. Lyderic's first and most natural feeling was joy at his own safety. What came next we have told. But the wide ocean of associations which the scene opened out, were to his selfishness as the broad sea to the speck of peopled machinery that floats on it.

A cold egotist like Lyderic, even in such a moment as this, is sure to display what should be called absence of soul, rather than its common term, presence of mind. Selfishness is of all agencies that which soonest lifts a man above the sympathies of his kind ; but degrades while it elevates, like a bad deed raising a tyrant above the laws. The screams and groans, the prayers

and imprecations that rose on all sides, the horrid forms of death and suffering, produced but little effect on Lyderic. He stalked on through all with a keen calculation of the advantages which must arise to him ; and while his gaze seemed all abroad, it was turned in to the very depths of his own interest. A generous mind at such a time would have forgotten every thing but what was dictated by the first impulse of humanity. A hero would have hurried to relieve the sufferers. Lyderic prepared to profit by the calamity.

He was now chief of the remnant of what was a few weeks before a high spirited and well appointed army. Its present force he did not attempt to estimate, but he saw that, be that what it might, the object of all its labours was accomplished, and the fulfilment of his hopes facilitated if not complete. Welbasch Castle was destroyed ; Trovaldo was no more. But De Bassenveldt, Theresa, Beatrice ? were *all* his objects within his reach ? Forcing his way through every obstruction, he strove to collect whatever force might be available.

He passed by the dead and the disabled soldiers, but rallied all who, like himself, stood sound and whole. A trumpeter was among the earliest of those ; and he blew loudly the call to arms, which rung in the ears of many an astounded and expiring wretch, like the summons at which they were to rise incorruptible. Answering sounds of ralliement soon pealed from one end to the other of the scene. Blackened, scorched, and otherwise disfigured beings, scrambled along, from all sides, in the mechanical efforts of discipline, or urged by a gregarious impulse of security, which, in the hour of danger, brings man close to man. A short period sufficed to unite some hundreds in a tolerably compact body, armed and unarmed, but ready for their leader's bidding.

Lyderic placed himself at their head, addressed a few encouraging words, and without damping their faintly reviving courage by the announcement of Trovaldo's death, he led them on towards the remaining skeleton of the fortress. Unopposed by any but passive difficulties, they continued

their way, and soon surmounted the ruined battlements, and stood in the midst of the late populous court-yards. Not a being was to be seen; but before they could give expression to their conjectures upon this solitude, the distant shots and sounds of conflict told them that the garrison had abandoned the place, and were still fighting their way to freedom.

Lyderic's feelings were of a mixed kind at this conviction. He was rejoiced to escape a personal encounter with De Bassenveldt, whom he feared still more than hated. He hoped that some chance shot might even then rid him of him for ever. Next came a pang of disappointment, at the dread that Theresa had escaped—and then the strongest of all, in the certainty that Beatrice was lost to him. He would at that moment have given up all on earth for her possession, for his passion for her was the most powerful and the least vile his sordid nature had ever known.

With the insufficient force around him, scarcely

recovered from their fright, and in the midst of darkness, he dared not attempt to pursue the fugitives. He could only secure his possession of the ruined fortress, till day-light might enable him to collect the cavalry of the army from their surrounding cantonments. Agitated by the mingled success and failure of his hopes, he moved through the desolate scene, gradually concentrating his troops for their dreary bivouac, and issuing orders for the earliest appearance of morning. While he ranged about, under pretence of seeking Trovaldo's body, baffled in attempts to recognise various parts of the castle, whose locality he had known so well, and avoiding the tottering walls, which were each moment falling and changing the aspects of every point of the ruin, he came at length to the little enclosed garden, which had been appropriated to the use of Theresa and Madame Marguerite, and which was so lately overlooked by the window of the Wizard's Tower.

The place was now more than half filled with

the fragments of that fallen strong-hold of superstition, and as was believed of guilt ; and Lyderic was turning away, followed by the group of officers and soldiers who composed his hastily formed guard, when one of them exclaimed that he saw the body of a man amidst the beams of the floor that hung, partly suspended, and partly supporting portions of the walls, which had not yet settled into the final stillness of ruin. Lyderic heard this exclamation with a start of rapture. Could it be De Bassenveldt's body? It must be one of the castle's inhabitants, for none of the besiegers could have there met his death. Why not De Bassenveldt's?—So argued Lyderic's wishes, not his reason, as he strode across in the direction pointed to by the soldier ; and with his sword half drawn, he was ready to plunge it into the body, and make assurance doubly sure.

Pushing aside those who stooped to the examination, Lyderic fixed his eyes on the object of scrutiny. One glance was sufficient to con-

vince him it was not De Bassenveldt. The height was as nearly as possible the same, but the form was slighter. The imperfect bursts of light, throbbing as it were through the smoke and gloom, were not sufficient to reveal minutely the dress of the person thus discovered. A couple of the soldiers lifted the body up from beside a heavy beam, which had at once wounded and preserved it from being crushed by the falling roof. The sudden motion turned the face upwards. A stream of blood flowed over the pallid forehead and cheeks. The eyes were closed, the mouth compressed, as though pain had not relaxed into death, and a feeble groan confirmed these symptoms of life. But it brought to Lyderic a still more thrilling conviction—it was Beatrice who lay before him !

The most callous heart in existence has, let us hope, its vulnerable point of tenderness. Had Lyderic de Roulemonde never known Beatrice, he might have been for ever a mere villain, without one redeeming trait. But her

influence brought him within the pale of sympathy, for it caused him to suffer. As he now beheld her, he endured an excess of anguish such as he had never before known or imagined. He snatched the senseless body from those who held it, clasped it in his arms, and hurried by whatever way he could from the ruins, loudly commanding all those around him to order all the surgeons of the camp to assemble at his tent, which was, in virtue of his station, that so lately occupied by the ill fated Trovaldo. He scarcely paused till he arrived there, and he placed his burthen on the couch of her former tyrant. The surgeons soon came, and profusely applied their united skill to the poor patient. Nature assisted the consultation, and in a short time Beatrice was on the point of recovering her bewildered senses; and pronounced out of all danger from her hurts, except such as might arise from the fever to be expected. Repose was then prescribed as the best remedy—the surgeons withdrew—and Lyderic alone watched by the side of the couch.

The broad gleam of the risen sun came into the tent as Beatrice awoke to a thorough sense of her situation. Partial snatches of recovery had flitted across her mind for a full hour before. But the positive return of reason was long in gaining the ascendant; and the reality of her fate came with it in frightful evidence. The first objects that caught her glance, and then threw it back like a chill weight upon her heart, were portions of dress and accoutrements which she recognised too acutely as belonging to Trovaldo. The couch, too, on which she lay was not to be mistaken. She knew it well—and odious associations came with the recollection. How she came there, and all the previous circumstances of her fate, were absorbed in the first thrill of terror, at knowing she *was* there. She kept her eyes voluntarily closed, expecting every moment that Trovaldo's hated form would stand before her.

Lyderic, satisfied that Beatrice was out of danger and at his mercy, soon recovered his self-

command; and while he sat watching at her side he found leisure to pen, but with a hand trembling with excitement which unnerves the firmest, a hurried despatch to the archdukes, announcing the destruction of the castle, Trovaldo's death, and the other military events of the night, and leaving no room for an inference that the success was not wholly to be attributed to him. He mentioned the escape of the garrison, as a desperate resource of a mere handful of remaining rebels, and stated it as doubtful whether De Bassenveldt had not himself perished. A private note to Zaputa, told him that no tidings had yet been heard of the Provost of Flanders, or of Theresa, implored his interest for Lyderic's immediate appointment to the government of Bruges, with full power over the ex-burgomaster, whom he claimed as his prisoner, and concluded with an assurance that the promised share in the gold-beater's immense wealth, should not at least be lessened in consequence of this exercise of ministerial influence. These,

with a notification of his immediate return to Brussels with the remains of the army, completed the contents of his despatches; and after he had committed them to the hands of the officers who waited in the outer compartment of the tent, he cast a cautious glance at Beatrice, and saw that her looks met his.

Beatrice, whose recovering faculties had been wholly filled with the image of Trovaldo, felt instant relief, when the whispered sound of Lyderic's voice caught her ears, and a throb of pleasure filled her breast as her eyes involuntarily opened, and perceived him bending over her couch. But this was the feeling of a moment. A sense of loathing rushed upon her, as she recollected that Trovaldo's dreaded presence was replaced by De Bassenveldt's base betrayer, the instigator of his intended murder, and he, who, at the moment of the Moriscoe's memorable escape from the Spanish camp, had, with cool blood-thirstiness, ordered the paralyzed soldiers to rouse from their surprise, and fire. Her feelings suf-

ferred an instant revulsion, but Lyderic saw it not; for her closed eyelids, and half open lips, gave no evidence of the bitterness of her scorn.

“ Beatrice !” murmured he, sinking on one knee beside the couch—“ you know me—that passing glance says that you do, and that my presence is not hateful to you. Oh, speak to me—say that I do not deceive myself—let the first words of awakening sense tell me, that fate has not thrown you into my hands in vain—that I have not triumphed over all enemies, and gained my heart’s dearest wish, but to sink under the withering blight of your indifference ! Speak, oh, speak to me !”

These words completed Beatrice’s return to sense, and her rising contempt calmed the agitation which hatred would have fermented into anger. A keen perception of her actual situation came across her, and she resolved to avail herself of Lyderic’s present mood, to gain information of others dearer to her than herself.

“ I do know you, Baron de Roulemonde,”

said she, again opening her eyes, “but ere a word is spoken between us of mere personal import, answer me, has Count Ivon escaped?”

“Count Ivon?” echoed Lyderic, with a start that proved how harshly the name grated on his ear. “Have you no thought but for him?”

“Yes, for my brother, for Theresa—where are they? Are they, too, in your power?”

“Would that they were!” replied Lyderic, clenching his hands, and biting his lip, while a scowl brought his brows down close to his unspeaking eyes. A murmur of half-uttered thanksgiving was Beatrice’s only retort, while Lyderic, recovering himself, went on.

“No, Beatrice, you alone are in my power! Yet I only wish to use it for our mutual happiness—of the others and their fate I am ignorant, and while you are thus within my reach, they are as nought to me—but now—”

“And Don Juan?”

“He exists no more. The explosion which destroyed the castle, left me the chief of a vic-

torious army, and oh! better than the world's sovereignty, it threw you, Beatrice, into these arms, scarcely harmed, saved, as I myself, by miracle, and proving that destiny meant you to be mine."

"Alla is great and good! Be my destiny fulfilled!" murmured Beatrice, in fervent prayer, not meant for mortal hearing. But Lyderic caught the words, and in the mental blindness of passion he saw not their real import, but applied them to his own purposes.

"You consent then, Beatrice — wonderful creature that you are! above your sex in every personal attribute, and above ours in the mind's strongest faculties, you will not wage a vain war with fate. You own at length what I too deeply felt the first hour I saw you—that nature meant us for each other! You will now, beloved Beatrice, in this hour of my triumph, consummate my long cherished hopes, give victory its real value, and crown my deep passion with its just reward! Beatrice!"

As he murmured these last words, and, still on one knee beside the couch, attempted to pass his arms round its pale and languid but beautiful tenant, the touch of his trembling hands, and the breath from his quivering lips that came warmly upon her cheek, darted electrically through her, and at once congealed each soft emotion, and condensed the whole energy of her spirit into scorn. She shrunk for an instant back—then quickly raised herself on one arm, and with the other pushed aside the raven tresses that hung disordered on her face and neck—and then, looking sternly on Lyderic, she spoke,

“Baron Roulemonde, I have heard you out, with a calmness which God has given me, to compensate for the heavy anguish I am doomed to suffer. My mind is clear and bright in this dreadful hour. Listen to the words it inspires. You call on me to submit to fate, to fulfil my destiny, to admit your passion—to return it. Like all believers in the creed I follow, I bow implicitly to the fixed will of Heaven, but

like all who know the scope and worth of reason; I never was nor will be an inert mass of matter, to be moulded at the will of any who wears a mortal form, but to whom my mind acknowledges nor fealty nor fellowship. There did—Heaven grant there *does*—live one with whom the viewless links of sympathy bound me, heart and soul—but you are not he! one, for whom Fate meant me—not as the sensual agent of mere passion—not for the degrading purposes you contemplate—but as the pure partner of his noble mind, from which no blow but death's alone can sever me.”

“Beatrice, hear me!” said Lyderic, in accents more deeply impassioned than before—
“I cannot listen to nor look on thee. The influence of that detested one is on thy very brow—it engenders a demon in my breast, which glowed and melted erewhile with tenderness that seraphs might have breathed in. Beware how you force the growth of this foul fiend! I love thee now—even *now*, while thine eyes

dart lightning and thy lip curls with scorn. A moment more may be too late—my very heart's blood may change into gall if it be forced into unnatural heat. Turn, then, thy looks away—close those silent yet too eloquent lips—let my arms encircle thee and my heart throb against thine! Let the ardour of my love consume this forced disdain!”

“*Thy love! Thy love!*” uttered Beatrice, looking still more fully and almost fiercely on him—
“Polluted and profaned for ever be the holy passion if thou darest touch the threshold of its temple! Away from me! Begone! Aye, start and rise up, wretch, odious wretch as thou art! De Bassenveldt’s influence on my brow! Aye, in my inmost soul, that loathes thee like a reptile it cannot condescend to hate. De Bassenveldt! How durst thou breathe a thought of him, and not be consumed! I have felt thy warm breath like the sulphur-flame of hell upon my cheek—thy finger’s touch has thrilled through me, more chilling than Azrael the Death Angel’s grasp—

Thy *love* ! Miscreant ! Let my scorn wither thy heart into ashes !”

Fevered, yet exhausted, Beatrice sunk back on the couch, while Lyderic, having risen as she spoke, in the first impulse of his rage, seized his sword from the table by his side, pulled it from the scabbard and drew back his arm, about to plunge it into her breast. She saw the movement as she sank back, and unable to utter her defiance, she only threw open her arms as if to court the blow.

“ No !” said Lyderic, in a hollow tone, as though his voice came from the depths of some cavern, and at the same time he quietly sheathed the weapon—“ No !” thou shalt have no mercy ! By the saints, thou shalt be well paid back thy scorn ! Mark me, Beatrice—for thy half convulsed lid and lip betray thy consciousness—thy words, thy looks, have changed me, as though the marrow and blood of manhood were turned at once to stone. I feel that my cheek is colourless—that my lips are livid—that my eye is glazed.

My heart *is* withered, and the ashes shall be strewn upon thy path ! You *scorn* me ! Good ! I feel the spell—but the enchantress shall perish with her victim's pride ! You have degraded me—I feel, I acknowledge it.—You might have raised me above mortality—you have frozen me into a very fiend. In the solemn agony of my self-contempt I avow all this—and now for my revenge !”

Having uttered these words in a voice half suffocated by rage, he raised the curtain that divided the tent, and advancing to the outer opening, he beckoned an attendant officer.

“ Summon hither on the instant,” said he, “ Dom Lupo and his attendants. A Moriscoe maiden, in the guise of manhood, a relapsed, an avowed follower of Mahmoud, a fugitive from her convent, awaits her doom at the mercy of our holy mother church, into whose hands I resign her.”

The bigotted though brave veteran who received this order, threw up his hands and eyes in

pious horror, bowed his head, and signed on his bucklered breast the form of the cross, whose memory should teach mercy that might melt through plates of steel; and he hastened to seek Dom Lupo de Lucerdo the inquisitor, who, with two familiars, attended the royal army, like the foul birds that hovered on its track, in instinctive readiness to seize on and devour their prey. Lyderic turned into the inner portion of the tent. He had no remorse as he gazed on his victim, lying silent and resigned to the horrors which the name of the inquisitor announced for her. He stood looking on her as placidly as though he neither loved nor hated her. Yet it was hatred in its deadliest nature that completed the prompt transition.

Very soon did Dom Lupo De Lucerdo, a Dominican friar, commissary of the Inquisition, and deputy of Don Alonzo del Canto, the hoary head of the unholy tribunal in the Low Countries, make his appearance in Lyderic's tent. He was accompanied by the two lay brothers of his order,

who acted by turns as familiars, witnesses, or executioners. One of them bore the banner of the Inquisition, to which all bowed down as it passed : a black velvet field, on which was embroidered a cross in green satin, with an olive branch worked on one side, a naked sword on the left, and the motto “ *Esurge Domine et Judicæ causam tuam.*”^{*} Dom Lupo was not one of those imbecile brothers who obtained admission under the title of Inquisitor of the Faith, avowedly because they were deficient in *reason*, whose ignorance gave rise to the well-known proverbial question and answer—

Qu. Que cosa es Inquisicion ?

Ans. Un santo christos, dos candeleros, y tres majaderos.[†]

He was a learned monster, who prostituted

^{*} This motto is copied from an original edict of the Inquisition. It contains three errors, the original text being, “*Exurge Deus, Judica causam tuam.*” *Psalm lxxiii. v. 22.*

[†] *Qu.* What constitutes an Inquisition ?

Ans. One crucifix, two candlesticks, and three blockheads.—Alluding to the number of judges, and the objects required at their sittings.

powerful talents to the worst purposes, being never known to swerve from the hard and narrow path of bigotry. He was still a young man, being one of the few exceptions to the rule of the Inquisition, which prescribes forty as the minimum of its officers' age, to lessen the chances of feeling exercising its sway in their breasts. But in the present instance the precaution might be safely dispensed with, for Nature had given Dom Lupo as hard a heart as though time had been half a century employed in its petrification.

He entered the tent, and totally unmoved at sight of the pale, exhausted, and beautiful creature who lay before him, he approached the couch to which Lyderic pointed, and uttered in his official twang the horrid summons which had made many a bosom thrill.

“ Deliver yourself up a prisoner to the Inquisition !”

At the same instant one of the familiars, prepared to act as secretary, seated himself, and produced writing materials ; while the other mum-

bled some jargon, of confiscation or sequestration against goods, chattles, and properties, which the poor culprit never had, and as they were fully resolved never should live to possess. The inquisitor then commenced to recite the usual oath to speak the truth, and the questions which constitute the "interlocutory investigation," but no answer was returned. He repeated his leading interrogatory in a louder voice, and followed it up by a declaration that if the accused persevered in obstinate silence, he would proceed by *denunciation* instead of *judicial inquest* as he had leniently intended; and in lieu of acting on the *edict of grace*, under which a prisoner is mercifully allowed to be his own accuser, he would be forced to have recourse to the forms of the *edict of faith*, which requires secret impeachment, and the consequences of which would be the many varieties of torture, which were sure to be followed by death.

Lyderic grew cold with horror as these fearful words were uttered; but it was now too late to

encourage feelings of remorse or dread, nor dare he dream of rescuing her whom he had denounced : he might as well have hoped to snatch a victim from the jaws of a hungry tiger. He stood in an attitude of rigid attention, his knees trembling, his teeth chattering, and his eyes fixed on Beatrice's face.

After some minutes, which the working of her features pronounced to be spent in some deep mental struggle, she opened her eyes, and looked fixedly on the inquisitor and his creatures, and said in a feeble, but not a faltering voice,

“ Ministers of vengeance, I have heard your words, and I look upon ye undismayed. I know my fate, and am ready to meet it. I understand too the impious jargon of your calling. You shall be robbed of half your anticipated delight. I *do* accuse myself of heresy, and avow my hatred to the blasphemous doctrines of your sect. There is but one God, and Mahommed is his prophet !—no secret wretch is wanting to denounce me—and yonder base being shall be at least spared that

atrocious crime. I thus avoid the torture—and I court the death which you must award me.

“ Yet think not it is from craven fear of bodily pain ! No ! The torture that could not dismay Maria Borhorques—the anguish that was bravely borne by Leonora Vibero, and a thousand other victims, I might well sustain. But I would not give a triumph to your hellish tribunal, beyond the mere death-pangs which I know I am doomed to suffer. I scorn your pity—I defy your power ; and I would die a thousand deaths sooner than invoke your justice, for that would be the merest mockery of all. Yet I know that *did* Justice dare to rise up against your tyranny, every hair of my head were safe ; for the laws of Spain expressly recognise the capitulation of Grenada, when Ferdinand and Isabella granted freedom of worship and security against forced conversions to all the Moriscoe race. But why do I speak of this ? might I not as well speak to stones ? Away with me then—I am yours ! and may God and his prophet uphold me in the fulfilment of my doom ! ”

The inquisitor calmly listened to this speech, while the secretary took down the words. Nothing was said in reply until the record was entered into the real book of doom. Then Dom Lupo muttered some set form of words; and advancing to Beatrice, who had once more sunk down on the couch, he placed his hand on her shoulder, which had been disembarrassed of the close doublet by the surgeon's directions, and with a sentence of unholy invocation he took possession of her, in the name of the Inquisition, and in right of the sacred mystery, whose name we must not (following his example) blasphemously invoke.

As Beatrice felt the pressure of the inquisitor's hand upon her, the blood seemed to curdle round her heart, and every nerve felt cramped. In a moment more she was enveloped in a dark cloth mantle, carried from the tent, and placed in a black covered litter or waggon which awaited outside. A guard of attendants, in the habits of the holy office, walked beside. The inquisitor

mounted his horse, which was caparisoned in the trappings peculiar to his office. Lyderic saw the whole pass before his eyes, as if it were the solemn pageantry of death. He gazed for a while on the curtains that covered in the rude carriage. He marked the procession pass away. But as the door of the tent was closed again he made no effort to move or speak. Turning his eyes involuntarily towards a small mirror that stood on a table, he darted back electrically on seeing a smile upon his features.

“Ha!” exclaimed he, “I did not think myself such a villain! But—but—has she not *scorned* me? Is not De Bassenveldt the object of her love, and am not I the object of her *loathing*?”

CHAPTER IV.

THE dislocation of the whole machinery of the besieging army now went rapidly on; and we must hurry our readers along, with a correspondent promptitude. A small force of cavalry was despatched by Lyderic to watch the movements of the retreating patriots, who with De Bassenveldt at their head had easily forced the line of blockade, and taken their way towards the Isle of Bommel, where Prince Maurice was supposed to be with the chief army of the States.

But all Lyderic's feelings urged him away from the scene of his various villainies, towards the theatre where he hoped to enact a part of splendid success; while a rankling revenge against Beatrice seemed to call for the consummation of her doom, and to promise in it an oblivion of his baseness.

“In advance! To Brussels!” were therefore the brief commands, loudly passed on from regiment to regiment, and echoed in all the various departments of the quickly decomposed encampment.

The inquisitor and his gloomy train formed one of the most important appendages to the headquarters in Lyderic's advance; and the total want of prisoners, for its completion as a military spectacle, seemed amply recompensed in the bigotted feelings of the times by the poor trophy of one desolate woman. The cart which conveyed Beatrice—fevered, exhausted, and miserable—was viewed by the soldiery, and the population that gazed on their march, with a triumphant ve-

neration equal to that inspired by the holy ark in the movements of the armies of Israel.

It was almost nightfall on the second day of the march, when a halt was ordered close under the walls of the ancient monastery of St. Benedict, not far from the little town of Wavre on the banks of the Dyle, into which route the headquarters and the chief officers of the army had struck off from the high road leading from Namur to Brussels, in pursuance of a vow of thanksgiving, to be offered up at the shrine of our Lady of Peace by the survivors, in case of the success of their expedition against Welbasch Castle.

During the approach to this celebrated spot, Dom Lupo, riding beside the litter or cart which contained his captive, had not ceased to pour into her ears a strain of oppressive lecturing upon its merits and history.

In spite of her efforts to repel this, the numbing buzz of the inquisitor's voice sounded in her brain, and his words floated there in mazy circles. Images connected with his discourse rose before

her. In the peaceful valley where the grey twilight shewed her the evidence of nature's culture, she could not help imagining the arid desert where a brawling torrent had struggled through rocks and briars, till (accompanied by miraculous lights and heavenly music in honour of the Virgin) all obstructions were invisibly cleared away, and the chapel erected on the neighbouring hill was removed by angels' hands into the valley, close by the spot where the monastery was soon after built. Then the gaunt figure of Godfrey of the bushy beard, carrying in his brawny arms and laying on the shrine the relics brought from the Holy Land—the belt, the bodkin, and the scissars of the Virgin—which had worked such wondrous miracles for centuries past. These and a thousand phantasmal accessories danced before the bewildered Beatrice, as she lay in her litter and looked through the open curtains, upon the massive walls and arched portico of the abbey; while her gloomy guards paced silently to and fro; and the mules, loosened from their traces, snatched

their meal of black rye bread eked out by the scanty herbage of the road side.

The solemn pealing of the organ and the chant of the vesper service now swelled upon her ears. A mysterious dizziness of sensation seemed to envelope her. Her eyes felt heavy. Her head drooped upon her breast. An awful and undefinable dread stole upon her, which with fevered efforts she strove to rouse from, but in vain. The recollections of her late conventional duties, the solemn rites, the penances, pomps, and austerities of the religion she had forsworn, all crowded upon her now in a maze of torturing confusion. She felt herself to pant and throb for relief. The open porch of the abbey seemed to invite her, while a mysterious agency appeared to impel her towards the outspread arms of reconciliation and forgiveness in the bosom of the church. Her senses all begun to reel—she lost all power of action or of thought—and in a maze of wonder and awe, she felt herself at once transported into the nave of the sacred building.

Beatrice gazed around in breathless agitation. The faint twilight, coming in through the lofty windows, mixed with the candles of the altar and the lamp that hung before the shrine, in a dim and drowsy light. The organ swelled, and a chorus of invisible singers joined their voices to its high sounding notes. No priest stood at the main altar, no monk bent before the shrines, no choristers filled the galleries. Beatrice stood alone in the midst of the solemn scene, between a file of marble figures of saints and warriors, surmounting a range of monuments that extended at each side of the long aisle in which she seemed rivetted. The organ ceased its notes—the voices died away—and with a simultaneous movement every one of these carved effigies slowly raised themselves up and shewed the loathsome reality of a fleshless skull; while as each shook its fearful head in solemn time-keeping, the teeth chattered, and the bones of every skeleton figure rattled in their stony sockets. A few seconds elapsed, when the organ again swelled out, the

viewless choir recommenced the strain, and each statue sunk slowly down into its own sculptured identity.

Beatrice would have fled from the torturing scene, even back to the hateful protection of her gloomy guards, but a spell seemed on her, to root her to the spot.

Again the music ceased, and again the horrid solemnity of salutation was acted by the statues. In a sickening agony she attempted to scream—and although her voice seemed stifled in her throat, it appeared to rouse the slumbering genius of the now unholy place. A figure of awful mien and terrible aspect advanced to her. The lurid light that streamed from it in every part rendered it more obscure than evident. A deep voice, that seemed not new to her, exclaimed, “Sinner, I wait for thee!” Beatrice would have uttered some exclamation for mercy—but ere she could speak, a broad hand pressed heavily on her shoulder. A horrid instinct told her whose it was. She opened her eyes with an electric shock, and the fiend-

like visage of the inquisitor glowered in between the open curtains of the litter, in which the delirious sufferer had dreamed her dream of torture.

The next day witnessed the triumphant entry of Lyderic de Roulemonde and his army into Brussels. Ere evening closed he had laid an account of his exploits at the feet of the archdukes, had been raised up from his sycophant posture of homage, invested with the order of the Fleece, assured by his grateful sovereigns of their most unbounded favour, and become at once the admiration and envy of a crowd of courtiers. At the same time Beatrice, with burning brow and boiling blood, was laid on her miserable pallet of straw, loaded with execration and threatened with a speedy and agonized death, in the loathsome dungeons of the *Amigo*, as the inquisitorial prison was named, as if in mockery of its hapless inmates. The destruction of Welbasch Castle opened the whole line of communication, between Brussels, the Meuse, and the countries of the Rhine, in which

it was believed the campaign was now about to begin with renewed vigour on the part of the States of Holland; while Schenck, the life and soul of the movements on the borders of Brabant, was planning his attack on the important fortress of Nimeguen, which was considered an object of paramount necessity. De Roulemonde's force, though reduced full one half of its original strength since it marched under the command of Trovaldo, was now disposable, and of considerable importance as a reinforcement to the Marquess of Berg, who with the small, yet principal, army of the archdukes, held the revolted fort of Saint Andrew in check, and was prepared to act as Prince Maurice's demonstrations might require.

In this important moment both Albert and Isabella displayed great vigour and ability, labouring in the vocations of government with their wary ministers, and preparing for the approaching struggle with all the foresight which the crisis imperatively claimed. Amidst secret councils, regulations of finance, and military plans,

but little heed could be given by the supreme heads of the state to the obscure details of priestly persecution. And even had more leisure been allowed, it is doubtful if the archbishops, in their proved bigotry, would have stretched the arm of power to shield from the vengeance of the church her who had abjured its doctrines and violated its rights. The doom of Beatrice was adjudged and executed with fierce rapidity.

A law of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, passed half a century before, had decreed the frightful punishment of living burial against female heretics, and many executions of the kind had varied by their bloodless atrocity the horrid butcheries committed all through the Low Countries during the tyranny of Alva. After that period such sacrifices had been less frequent ; but as late as three years before the date of our story, an instance of this barbarity had publicly taken place in Brussels, by the orders of Albert, who at that time held the highest dignity of the christian priesthood, next to that of its supreme head. A poor servant girl

named Anne Vanderhove, arrested on a charge of heresy, refused in all the pride of martyrdom to renounce her faith. She was condemned to the grave—not to the common occupancy of that cold refuge of the lifeless body, but to all the horrors of living contact and hopeless struggles with the suffocating clay. She suffered her punishment, in the midst of a crowd of curious fanatics ; but such was the disgust inspired by the spectacle, that it was thought impolitic to hazard in the face of day another exhibition of the kind. Beatrice's judges, therefore, after a summary hearing, decreed that she too should be buried alive—but at night. She heard her sentence, in just sufficient exercise of reason to comprehend and shudder at it. But her mind, wandering and unsettled, had not force enough to dwell on the contemplation of what awaited her, and unconsciousness of her approaching fate gave her the semblance of indifference.

But Beatrice, with all her pride and almost unfeminine force of character, was not proof against a fate so horrible. As the hour drew nigh when

she was to be led forth to execution, the blood in her throbbing veins seemed suddenly frozen, like the hot streams of lava checked in its molten flow. Her blanched cheek and starting eye-balls, told that her fever was quenched, and her insensibility awakened to a full sense of her terror.

In darkness and silence the sad procession moved from the prison's most private door, on the night fixed for the execution, the third after the hapless girl's arrival in Brussels. The persons employed were few ; no sympathising crowd attended to strain the victim's pride and courage, and make her for very shame's sake brave the terrific scene. Lone and desolate, she was led along by two brutal men, with taunt and execration ; they, dressed in the dark habits of their office ; she, bare-footed, and clothed in the yellow garment called a *san benito*, her beautiful jet locks cut close, and her disfigured head and pallid face surmounted by the conical cap in which the Inquisition decked its victims for sacrifice. Four masked men walked first in the procession,

two carrying spades, and two bearing the insignia of the Holy Office. Next followed the secretary, with a book and materials for writing, ready to record the particulars of the execution. Then came Beatrice, dragged onwards by her supporters, and urged towards the closing scene by the odious voice of Dom Lupo, pouring a strain of pious blasphemies into her reluctant ears. He stepped close in her track, and leant his head forward, determined that she should not have a moment's respite till the damp earth closed those ears for ever. A dozen armed men brought up the march; and no suspicion of the inquisitor's proceeding aroused the citizens, in the narrow and unlit streets through which it moved.

In less than half an hour, Beatrice's bruised and lacerated feet, felt a sudden relief that spread up refreshingly through her whole frame, on pressing a grass-plot, moistened by the night dew. At the same moment, a gleam from a lantern opened by one of the men close to her, shewed her that she stood on the brink of a

newly-dug grave. She started back at the appalling sight—and was upheld from falling by her attendants, on whose faces she saw a malignant grin, while the tones of Dom Lupo's voice seemed to hiss in her ears, like the serpent triumph of a fiend.

“Erring daughter of the only true and most merciful church,” gloomed he, “unrepented sinner, on the verge of death—ere the grave close over thy living agony—ere the arm of Almighty wrath shove thee into the pit of Hell, and eternal flames enfold thee—listen to the last offer of the mother thou hast outraged, of the faith thou hast defiled. Recant thy errors—renounce thy false Gods—confess thy crimes—and return into the blessed bosom of the church !”

Beatrice, rousing the whole force of her latent energy, pushed the inquisitor from her, with a look of scorn, burst from her keepers' arms, and sprang into the open grave.

“Lost and condemned for ever and ever—let the earth lie heavy on her head !” exclaimed the

furious priest, stamping his foot with rage, and motioning to the familiars, who instantly commenced to shovel the earth into the grave. Not a sound was heard but the soft rustling of the leaves over head, for this scene took place in the open ground above the Sablon, formerly mentioned as the scene of some earlier executions ; and Beatrice's grave was dug at the very foot of the tree, where the Jews in 1370 had expiated their imputed sacrilege.

Not a murmur, not a movement betrayed an instant's shrinking from her fate, as the cold heap of clay covered Beatrice to the very neck. Her face was still above ground, and the infuriated bigot, whose word was to save her or stifle her voice for ever, once more approached. He knelt beside her—thrust his crucifix close to her still straining eyes—and in accents that faltered from rage, he cried out,

“ Dost thou still dare refuse? Death is on thy lips—hell gapes for thee ! Wretched woman,

say but one word—kiss the blessed relic, and thou art saved !”

“ There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet !” said Beatrice, in hollow and broken accents.

“ It is done ! Cover her quick ! Let her perish in eternal fire !” cried the inquisitor.

The executioners heaped the earth still higher—the head was covered in—and only then a smothered scream burst upwards, while the struggles of natural agony shook the mound to and fro. Still the legal and consecrated murderers went on, with trembling hands and quaking hearts. But as they hastily closed their work, a deep and heavy groan came upon the air from a not distant part of the waste ground ; and the group looking round in guilty terror, saw a man close wrapped in a cloak, but struggling with another—of aged and decrepit stature—as if he would break from his hold, and rush upon their unholy labours. A weapon gleamed in his hand ; and the whole group of guilt, inquisitor, fami-

liars and guards, struck with panic, and imagining rescue and revenge from a hundred indignant arms, hastily fled from the scene with loud cries for help.

In a moment the grave was torn open, and Beatrice, still panting in the struggle between life and death, snatched from its re-opened jaws, and about to be borne off in the close-locked arms of her brother, when the insatiate inquisitor, his ardent vengeance overcoming his fears, turned from his flight to give one assuring glance upon his victim's grave. By the light of the lanthorn which streamed on the ground, he saw that, instead of the indignant crowd his apprehensions had imagined, only two men were on the spot, one of them old and diminutive, and the other encumbered with the exhumed body. In the glow of fanatic fury, he forgot all personal fears, and, while his dastard creatures held on their terrified course, he sprang back alone to the burial ground, and seizing the old man with one hand, he stretched forth the other to grasp

from the Moriscoe's hold his still insensible burthen.

“Sacrilegious villains !” cried he, “give up your impious purpose, and resign the body of the recreant lost one. Let it rot in its earthy prison, till the last trumpet rouse it in resurged life to burn in eternal fire !”

A deep and silent plunge of the Moriscoe's poignard stuck the blaspheming bigot in the throat. Another blow pierced his heart, as he fell into the imperfectly hollowed grave ; and while he lay there several strokes were dealt on him by the feeble hands of the old man, with one of the spades which he tremblingly seized. And then, in the instinct of terror at the deed, he shovelled the loose earth over the bleeding carcase, while the Moriscoe's pale profile looked stern and rigid in the expiring light. The work was soon complete ; and the mound of earth thus hastily thrown up (soon covered with as rank weeds as ever sprang from a polluted soil) were long marked by shuddering superstition as “the

grave of the Mahommedan girl." The fate of the inquisitor was quite unsuspected; and he might have been still believed to have disappeared supernaturally, or perished by some less awful visitation, had not unerring records thrown light on his fate.

The tottering steps of the old man quickly led the way across the thickly-planted site of the little Sablon, and by many a winding lane and alley towards the hill of Caudenbergh, till the Moriscoe with his beloved burthen, found a safe refuge in the old man's dwelling, in the narrow street on the side of the hill, not a hundred yards below the house of the Marquis of Assembourg.

We cannot now pause to detail the circumstances under which the Moriscoe, escaping destruction in the catastrophe of Welbasch Castle, had availed himself of the subsequent bustle in the royal army to follow its progress to Brussels, watching for an opportunity of snatching his sister from her threatened fate. Neither must we enter into the particulars of his connection with Abram Hackaerts the well known crooked Jew

of Mechlin. It was however through the benevolent energy of that old man that he succeeded in acquiring the knowledge of the proceedings before the Inquisition in the case of Beatrice—and it was shrewdly believed that the key with which he unlocked the secrets of even that dark mystery was one of gold.

Be that as it may, he accomplished his purpose of doing good to a fellow creature, even though the objects of his beneficence were of a belief that pointed out him and his religion as most loathsome and detested. In his house, which may still be seen, with a façade distinguished by three curiously carved heads in medallions, and supported by two Herculean Cariatides, he sheltered the Moriscoe and his sister, till the latter recovered completely, and a chance of escape presented itself for both. But leaving them for awhile, we must now turn to her who it must not be forgotten is our heroine, and pursue in the next chapter the fortunes of the bereft and miserable Theresa.

CHAPTER V.

As soon as Renault Claassen and his faithful assistant Jans Brocklaer had cleared their way through the impediments offered by the outer defences of the castle, they struck off to the leftward, through the maple grove pointed out by De Bassenveldt in his conversation with the soldier; and there, favoured by the darkness, they found it easy to conceal themselves and their passive charge from the hurried search of Gallagher and his followers. To all the loud shouts and calls which the energetic Irishman sent ringing through the little wood, he received no answer

but the mimicries of echo, while the near report of the firing summoned him in his turn away, in tones too consonant to his feelings to be long resisted. The brief business of forcing the line of blockade and dispersing the astounded enemy ere the shock of the castle's explosion had ceased to agitate them, left De Bassenveldt free to return to the scene of his deepest anxieties, while his troops moved forward in compact order of march.

As Gallagher galloped on, and while a few straggling shots told him that the affair was all but over, he had nearly come into violent concussion with a horseman, speeding away from the contest, as furiously as he rode towards it. The hope of its being a flying foe, and the chance of ever so little fighting, made him joyously rein up his horse; and at the same moment drawing his sword, he wheeled upon the dimly-seen cavalier, and called aloud on him to turn and defend himself or yield.

“Ha! Gallagher!” cried Count Ivon, checking his career, and then forcing Rolando by spur

and rein to bound towards his lieutenant, “and Theresa? She is with you? Give her to my arms, and let’s away!”

“Saint Denis forbid that she was with me, colonel! Do you think I’d bring a delicate creature like her into the middle of the fighting? It is not *all* over, colonel?” said Gallagher impatiently, and again turning his horse’s head towards the sound of the faint firing. But De Bassenveldt, forcing Rolando still closer forward, caught his bridle and cried out furiously,

“Traitor! Villain! What have you done? Where is she? Where is Theresa? Lead me to her this instant!”

“Colonel,” said Gallagher, with a prompt expression of gravity, and in a determined tone, “these are hard words, but we have no time for explanation now. On the first occasion I shall not fail to ask your meaning. As for the lady, I can only say that they who hide may find, but it’s more than I was able to do. I have left the two men to continue the search; and under your leave

I will now return to my troop—but not to act the part of either villain or traitor !”

“ My brave comrade, my stanch friend ! pardon those hasty words—bear with me—I knew not what I said—I am wild with the fear of losing her—oh, where is she ?—answer me quickly, or I shall go mad !”

De Bassenveldt accompanied these impetuous words with the offer of his hand, which the warm-hearted Irishman could not reject. He seized it in his, and exclaimed,

“ Enough, enough, Count Ivon—I am more than satisfied—and may Heaven forgive me for being angry with you for a foolish phrase ! Didn’t you before now save me and stand over my lifeless body more than once in the battle field, and is it I that should quarrel with you now, when your heart’s full and your pocket empty—your beautiful young mistress gone astray, and your fine old castle destroyed ! Colonel dear, let me throw my arms round your neck if you love me !”

“ Not now,” said De Bassenveldt, drawing

back, “not now, my friend—think how precious time is—think of her who may be lost to me by a moment’s delay ! Come, Gallagher—follow me, to find her or perish !”

An abrupt curvette turned Rolando’s head once more in the direction of the wood ; while Gallagher missing his intended embrace of De Bassenveldt, had nearly pitched with open arms over his horse’s neck. But he recovered himself instantly, and dashed off at full speed after the almost frantic lover. In a few seconds they had gained the skirts of the grove, and they heard the voices of the two soldiers, continuing their search with loud halloos and cries of “ a Bassenveldt ! a Bassenveldt !” not supposing that this watchword of their band at once drove the fugitives farther away, and drew on themselves an unlooked for, and just then untoward attack of the enemy. For some of the royalist troops who had rallied after the explosion, and forced their way through smoke and gloom along the subterranean galleries and out at the little postern, rushed on in pursuit of what they

concluded to be some scattered remnant of the flying garrison, collecting to the sounds of their war cry. Full a score of Italian and Spanish lancers, burning for revenge, sprang on to the wood, while others sallied from the postern; and when De Bassenveldt and Gallagher reached its first straggling trees, they were stopped by several opponents, who yelled out in different languages and tones, "Velasco! Valdez! Lombardy!" the names of their respective regiments.

"Bassenveldt a boo! Whoop!" vociferated Gallagher, forgetting all prudence or reserve in the inspiring clash of arms, and laying furiously about him with his rapier, while lance and halbert rattled against his armour and the mailed covering of his charger. Count Ivon, too, assailed at all sides, was obliged to fight for life and death. In the fury of despair he drove his rowels into Rolando's sides and strove to plunge forward into the wood; but the united efforts of rider and steed could not overthrow the thick mass of opposing men, who now hemmed the two friends in the

narrow road, and attacking them on all sides, seemed to make escape impossible.

Gallagher, less blinded than De Bassenveldt by the violence of feeling, saw that they must retreat or be lost. He therefore cried aloud,

“Count Ivon, Count Ivon, for the love of Christ turn Rolando’s head and fly—there are dozens coming up the causeway—escape while a moment is left us!” At these words a yell from the royalists broke forth—

“It is De Bassenveldt ! seize him alive—drag him down—the traitor is ours—huzza ! huzza !”

“Jesus have mercy on us !” exclaimed Gallagher, mingling French, English, and Irish, in a confusion of phraseology not to be described. “Are you mad, colonel, are you mad outright ! You’re ruined for ever if you won’t run ! Thieves, villains, make way ! Trample them down right and left ! Now, colonel, now, the road is clear—dash away, dash away ! Och ! There they have you again ! now, now, for it—one plunge over that prostrate dog, and away !”

Every word was enforced by a blow or a thrust. Edge and point gave emphasis to prayer and oath, while the hoarse screams of the royalists as they fell wounded under the horses' feet, or bellowed out encouragement and counsel to each other, were joined by the war shouts of the two Walloons, attracted back to the scene by Gallagher's well-known voice. With the last words we have recorded, he seized Rolando's bridle, and fairly dragged him round. He then struck him a blow on the flank, with the flat of his rapier and his whole strength, and in one resistless bound the quivering and foaming animal sprang across the bodies of the several entangled royalists, and darted like lightning along the open road. But poor Gallagher had not such good fortune. His heavier steed stumbled over the impeding carcasses and fell, and ere the gallant rider could recover or defend himself, or scarcely utter a dying imprecation, his helmet was torn from his head, and his skull cleft by redoubled blows, while the thirsty lances drank his life-blood, through every crevice

of his armour. The two dragoons met a similar fate; and when De Bassenveldt succeeded in pulling up his wounded and half maddened charger, he found himself alone, on the high parapet that overlooked the moat. He paused and looked round. His long accustomed perception of such scenes told him the truth.

“ Brave and devoted friend !” cried he, “ thou art destroyed in saving me !” But his mind could not dwell on the common calamity of a gallant follower’s death. The overwhelming object of its anxiety rushed up to view.

“ Oh, God ! and is she then lost to me ! Dolt, idiot, madman that I have been ! Oh, Theresa, Theresa, what are thy thoughts this moment—what thy fate ! and thou, Beatrice, I must not forget thee—what has become of thee !—’To have had the destiny of two such beings in my hands, and to have lost them ! Oh, agony and despair !”

The crowd of enemies now gaining on him and gathering upon the whole line of road, recalled him to his always ready aptitude to see events and

act on them. A high sense of duty told him that no selfish wretchedness should let him waste a life on which the safety of so many still depended; hope, too, that never dying star, shone through his night of woe; and honour, which love sanctified with a still holier glow, spoke loudly to him in the language of resistless force."

"Be it so!" said he—"Let Love, Hope, and Honour uphold me in this trying hour. Let me live for the chance of recovering her who alone gives worth to life, for whom a day of happiness may yet shine out, and I be doomed to share in! On, on, Rolando, my good, my noble steed."

Clapping his gauntleted palm against the scales of steel that guarded his horse's neck, the usual neigh of acknowledgment told there was yet one who knew him and stood his friend. Far outstripping the cumbered foemen who hopelessly pursued his track, he soon regained the little column and put himself at its head. Making every arrangement for retreat that prudence could suggest, he joined with a party of scouts, and led

their search on every side that Theresa could have fled by, and where it was possible to penetrate. The approach of morning, however, forced him to abandon the hopeless search. The royalist cavalry pursued him in numbers double his own. And, with a heart swelling with agony, but still animated with the valorous pride of concealing its sufferings, he went on his way with consummate skill, baffling his enemies, and leading the remnant of his intrepid followers, for the service of that country for which he had courted ruin, and now even braved despair.

While the bustling scene just described was going on, Theresa and her anxious guides had made great progress towards escape from their manifold dangers. The shouts and clangour were tones of joy to Renault Claassen, who involuntarily hoped that De Bassenveldt, Lyderic, and Trovaldo might be mingled in a common destruction, since Lambert Boonen was no more, and thus the main impediments between him and Theresa be removed; for while one rival such as those

existed, his timid passion dared not imagine success. But now a new light burst suddenly on him. For Nature, true to her system of incongruous developements, had chosen this moment of peril and distress, to open before him a broad scene of possible delight, which he gazed on, like the prophet on the promised land, till his head was dizzyed, and his heart thrilled with unspeakable emotion. As he moved along, with elastic step, leading Theresa's horse at its fastest walking pace, and keeping Jans Brocklaer panting beside him "at a good comelie trot," (as Blundeville describes the best movement of the Friezland horses,) he murmured to himself in a strain of involuntary vivacity.—"Yes, yes, my day is come! Fate has worked its silent course, leading me at last to what I dared not dream of reaching. All gone—all perished, perhaps, or at least scattered abroad beyond the probability of rivalry! And she now wholly dependent on me, 'her best, her only friend'—what blessed words! What claims on her gratitude, what chances of her affec-

tion ! Can I forget her glowing looks when she saved me from Trovaldo's fury, and the prior's denouncement ?—her glance of deep emotion, when I passed before her presence, frightened at my own daring pretension in asking for her hand ? And was my father right, after all ? Has my own cowardice alone thwarted her secret inclinations and balked the progress of my suit ? But *now*, now at least the coast is clear—and if devotion, delicacy, and daring are of avail in such a case, she shall find me worthy of the heart I have so long stood aloof from claiming."

Such thoughts as these gave buoyancy to young Claassen's movements. He seemed all at once imbued with a bold sagacity which prompted a thousand ready expedients of escape from the ever-shifting difficulties that beset his course ; and he passed through many risks unharmed, merely from the confident tone of mind which saved him from the over-caution that makes danger more dangerous. For five days he pursued the journey, of which he was the sole director, and for the chances

of which he was in some measure prepared, although he had not imagined that the conduct of such an expedition was to devolve on him alone.

When Renault Claassen left the Spanish camp, and repaired to the castle outlet (for which he had made a rendezvous with Lambert Boonen in their short conference the preceding day), he had taken some precautions for the furtherance of Theresa's safety, the only object he had at that time in view. Representing his designs to Lyderic, as solely for the purpose of securing her for him, he had obtained, in Trovaldo's hand and seal, a passport for himself, his sister, and their male domestic, under fictitious names, which would amply provide for their security in all parts of the country that might be in possession of the royalist forces, or still in allegiance to the archdukes. A sufficient supply of money for the exigencies of the occasion also lined the pockets of Claassen's doublet; and thus equipped, he now took his way close along the course of the Meuse, on its right bank, know-

ing that that would be his safest road to gain the province of Guelders, the army before Welbasch keeping all its communications with Namur by the opposite side of the river, and that of the Count of Berg maintaining its connection with Brussels through the strong places between the Isle of Bommel and Louvain.

Jans Brocklaer acted the part of a scout most admirably, for he had a natural tact for its cunning duties; and he would creep and crouch through bush and brake, prying and listening, escaping detection, and obtaining information, with an amazing instinct of espionage. The hospitable farm-houses of Brabant always afforded a willing shelter at night, and abundance of support by day, while a small supply of homely linen was obtained on easy terms. And if any inquisitive questioning assailed the travellers, the production of a passport, with the broad seal of a Spanish general, quickly silenced the inquirers, and produced a reverential increase of attention.

Thus journeying, they reached, on the sixth

day, that part of the Meuse on which Nimeguen is situated, having narrowly escaped many dangers of detection, from the armed police and other roving authorities, who examined their passports from time to time. As they started at sun-rise the next morning from their sleeping-place, an unlicensed house of entertainment close to the bank of the river, they observed on the opposite side a strong fort of a peculiar construction, and well adapted, it seemed, for the purpose of defence or of annoyance to the navigation, which it was clearly destined to command. Neither Claassen nor Brocklaer were sufficiently familiar with any topography beyond the immediate circle of their native town, to know what particular fort they saw before them. And she who formed the third individual of the party, Theresa, our woe-struck heroine, absorbed in the indulgence of her misery, could she have eyes or ears for aught that might arouse the attention of a happy or even thoughtless observer ! From the moment that Claassen had snatched her from the maddening contempla-

tion of the scene where all her earthly hopes were buried, she had submitted to his guidance, with a mechanical torpor that no excitement seemed again destined to shake off. The delicate care of her protector, the coarser kindness of her father's old servant, the varying scenes they passed through, the very dangers of their route, were alike insufficient to awaken her faculties from their state of mental abeyance. She eat, drank, slept—she listened to Claassen's cheering words, to Brocklaer's blunt comfortings—she smiled on them at times—but when she strove to speak, the words that would not yield to utterance seemed to fall back in a heavy load upon her sinking heart. The only phrase that had for days escaped her was an earnest entreaty that she might, if possible, be led back to her convent at Bruges. Renault Claassen vowed on the spot compliance with her wish, in all possible diligence, which too much precipitation was, however, sure to mar. He told her of his plan, the only safe one—of avoiding an immediate entrance into Flanders through Bra-

bant, and of seeking the protection of Prince Maurice, and making their way through Guelders. But while he said this, and meant it all to tranquillize, and, as much as possible, satisfy her mind, he secretly hoped that he was destined at no distant day to stand immoveably between the beautiful Theresa and the cloister in which she meant to immure herself.

As the travellers now moved on, they observed a number of canvas-covered boats stealing quietly along the course of the river under the opposite bank, and listlessly carried with the current towards Nimeguen, whose spires were visible before them in the morning haze. Claassen and Brocklaer remembered having heard the preceding night, that this morrow was the market day of the neighbouring town, and they concluded that the boats in question were freighted with peasantry and their rural merchandise. Yet there was a regularity in the compact and silent order of their liquid march, which spoke something more than the straggling train of open

barges following the track of this first flotilla, and evidently filled with country people and their stores of live and dead stock. Claassen and Brocklaer were but civilians, unlearned in the stratagems of war; and even the peasants and farmers whom they overtook, or who joined them on the road, more accustomed than the citizens to its wiles, seemed unsuspicious of the important and memorable expedition whose progress they now gazed on. But in a short time they were all made involuntary witnesses of a brief but animating episode of civil war.

A considerable winding in the road, caused by the intervention of a ferry, and some local obstructions then existing, gave the boats, carried on smoothly by the stream, a considerable start of the land travellers, and by the time these latter had gained a height overlooking the eastern entrance of the town, the former were in the very act of being moored in close line, by the sloping beach which led down from the open suburb. With a simultaneous movement of prac-

tised discipline, every awning was now at some concerted signal torn down, and each boat shewed at the same instant a freight of mail-clad men, while lances, swords, and targets glistened thickly in the beams of the risen sun. A shout of triumph burst from every boat. One warrior, rapier in hand and helmet in air, sprang on shore, and in a minute more three hundred gallant followers tracked his advancing steps, up to the gate of the surprised and unsuspecting town. The terrified inhabitants of the Faubourg fled along its straggling streets or hid within their houses, while the lazy guard that had lounged about the beach instead of standing to their arms, fell instant victims to their too great confidence of safety. The town itself and its garrison were also quite unprepared. Had the attack been made at night, every man would have been found at his post; but so daring an attempt in the open eye of morning was not to have been looked for, and could only have been imagined.

by such an intrepid and audacious partizan as Martin Schenck.

He, the leading chieftain who had first sprung on shore, now pushed forward to secure the object which had so long occupied all his thoughts, in the safe shelter of his fort on the river, in his bold inroads upon the Archducal territories, in his scanty hours of rest on his hard soldier-bed, or in the saddle, where much more than half of his unquiet life had been passed. The guard at the gate, panic-struck at the fierce pageant of advancing enemies, but still more so at the utterance of the dreaded name which the chieftain's followers shouted in a stunning yell, abandoned their post, threw away their arms, and fled into the town ; and the towers and walls rung with loud shouts of " Schenck ! Schenck ! Schenck !" — while the troops and citizens mingled together, in a confusion of alarm that a legion of demons could not have more forcibly aroused.

Pride, vengeance, and cruelty, were in the

heart of Martin Schenck as he rushed onwards to the open gate; and in an instant more, pillage and ruin would have glutted him and his fierce band, but for the daring conduct of one man, whose arm was nerved with the giant vigour of revenge. Just as the foremost of the assailants were putting their feet on the drawbridge which separated them from complete triumph, an individual whom chance brought to the spot, a fellow of fierce aspect, in attire half civil half military, whose face shewed the workings of terrible passion, and who displayed the bald and disgusting aspect of an earless head, threw himself up towards the chain that moved the bridge, and swinging from it with violent gesture, raised it abruptly, casting Schenck and his nearest companions back upon those close behind him. Several pistol shots were immediately discharged across the ditch which now gaped between the assailants and their mutilated opponent. He was however unharmed by the assault; and quickly securing the chains, he ran under the shelter of

the portal, rang for a few loud peals the alarm-bell with which the gate was furnished, and then as rapidly seized a lighted match which the coward sentinel had flung down as he and his comrades fled, and applying it to the touch-hole of the nearest gun, sent a shower of bullets into the ranks of the disappointed and furious enemy.

This intrepid and unexpected conduct saved the town, and was the signal of utter discomfiture to the well planned and bravely executed enterprise. Gun after gun in the immediate defence of the east portal was successively discharged by this solitary cannoneer; and while Schenck and his furious soldiers stormed, swore, and made frantic efforts to scale the wall, the garrison and citizens crowded towards them, to gain courage from the sight of their scanty members and desolate condition.

A hastily formed sortie was soon made from two of the other gates, and the assailants taken in flank, were obliged to retreat into some houses of the suburb, and turn their late attack into a feeble

and hopeless defence. The bells of the city rang out their assembling peals. The shouts of men, the screams of women and children, the roar of fire-arms, the clash of weapons and rattling of armour combined to complete the scene. Priests, carrying the Host in one hand and a sword in the other, rushed out at the several gates at the head of the furious multitude, and the air rang with cries of vengeance against the hated and execrated Schenck.

Nothing was now left to this still undaunted adventurer but a retreat to his boats, and reliance on the chances of the river to escape the perils of the shore. He accordingly gave the word; and all that remained safe and sound of his men sallied from the houses, and slowly wended their way back to the beach, fighting inch by inch, but exposed to assaults of every possible missile from the open streets or the thronged windows under which they passed. All those whom wounds disabled from following, were quickly butchered, and many fell on the disastrous retreat. But still

numbers gained the boats, and crowding in, seized their oars and pulled away in all the selfish energy of ruin. Schenck, as he had been the first man to land, so was he the last to re-imbark. He had gained the river's edge unharmed ; and at length stepped over the edge of the crowded boat which a feather's additional weight seemed sufficient to overturn. He had been close followed along the whole line of his retreat by the man before noticed, to whom his discomfiture was wholly owing, and who, armed with a small hatchet and a shield which he had picked up in haste, dealt blows of violent intention against the enraged but still cool and undaunted chief, whose rapier's point gave back each assault, with a well directed aim that left its track in his furious enemy's blood.

And now, while Schenck stood on the edge of the boat, and the oarsmen gave it a final shove into the deep stream, this desperate wretch, streaming with gore, and brandishing his savage weapon, sprang from the beach, and in the unerring grasp

of vengeance he seized Schenck round the body. Both tottered, stumbled, and fell into the water, while the boat was instantly upset and the whole of its crew submerged. Schenck and his destroyer several times sank and rose again, the latter in the very pangs of death pouring out a mingled expression of gurgling curses and suffocating laughter, and striking with his weapon at the now defenceless head of his drowned enemy.

“Down, down to the pit, fell villain!” muttered he, “know you not Louis Drankaert, who now pays you back his debt! To hell, to hell—I promised you death by fire or flood—choke, villain, choke—Ha, ha, ha, ha!”

And then a sudden lapse of sinew—a faint struggle—a last gasp—and both sank together, in the deep-locked and double embrace of hate and death.

Ere an hour elapsed, the ferocious populace, diving as though they sought pearls in the bottom of the flood, dragged up the bloated body of their enemy, and its sundered quarters were instantly

placed over the four principal gates of the town, mementos of the brutal spirit of the times, and the horror inspired by him, whose one grand quality of courage has made him in the page of history almost half a hero. A very few of the shattered expedition regained the fort, to recount the fate of their commander and comrades, and raise up a bloody spirit of retaliation.

The almost stupified beholders of this adventure, either stood transfixed, or fled, or hid from its observance, as curiosity or fear worked strongest. Claassen and Brocklaer were among those who remained looking on till the bloody scene was over. Theresa, now familiar with desperate deeds, but almost incapable of being moved by any mortal shock, sat passively on her horse, her head turned from the conflict, her heart uninterested in its result, till Claassen at the close of the tragedy led her passively into the town, the fermented state of which promised and indeed secured him a free and unobserved passage on his intended progress.

CHAPTER VI.

SCARCELY had the travellers lost sight of Nimeguen, and before they were beyond the sounds of the bells and the artillery which jingled and crashed for joy, than they entered into a district forming a strong contrast to that through which they had hitherto journeyed. Instead of pastoral tracts moderately sprinkled with small military parties, and occasionally swept by a band of marauders from the various strong places in possession of the contending powers, the whole country was now occupied by the Dutch army, which spread widely

across it in all directions, giving an extensive picture of military possession in its amplest term. Encampments dotted the pastures and meadows with their white tents and gay pavilions ; fields of young corn were trampled down by cavalry stations ; the roads cut up by the artillery and baggage waggons. Every village and farm house was an occupied post ; and the whole face of nature disfigured by the forced yet animating display of preparation for some enterprise of unusual magnitude.

Young Claassen's object being to gain the immediate protection of Prince Maurice, he attempted no concealment or subterfuge, but pushed forward in the direction of the nearest outposts of the Dutch army. A few hours' travelling brought him within the limits of the patrols ; and the first of the small bodies of mounted musqueteers with which he came in contact, stopped him and commenced a close examination, which he attempted to cut short by a peremptory demand to be conducted forthwith to the head-quarters. But this

object was not of such easy attainment as he supposed. Many forms were to be gone through before the cautious Dutchmen would suffer their idolized commander to run the risks of treachery, such as he had hitherto escaped from the hands of Panne, Renichon, and other agents of Jesuitical designs against his life. Claassen determined to submit quietly to suspicions he could not avert; and he contented himself with sending his name in writing to Prince Maurice, with an intimation that he had important news to tell from Nimeguen and Welbasch. He was then, with Brocklaer, placed in close security; and Theresa yielded herself up in passive indifference to the care of one of those coarse specimens of the female sex who follow the fortunes of a camp, by whom she was treated with more delicacy than was important to the existing apathy of her feelings.

The dragoon who was despatched by the officer in command of the patrole soon found Prince Maurice, immersed in the occupations which he so indefatigably followed up. The name of Re-

nault Claassen, and his promised intelligence from two points of such immediate interest, filled the active prince with anxiety for an instant conference; and scouting all notions of treachery or danger, which some of those around him suggested, he announced his intention of repairing to the outpost, to examine the prisoners, without the delay of waiting their arrival at his quarters. Having then calmly finished some orders which he was giving at the time, he rode off at a brisk pace, accompanied by his young and gallant brother Frederick-Henry, some officers of his staff, several of the commissioners from the various states of the union, who were in constant attendance upon his movements, and a large body of guards, which always escorted his visits to the precincts of the cantonments.

The clatter of horses' hoofs, trailing of rapiers, and rattling of spurs against the outer pavement and red-flagged floor of the farm house, were the signals that told the arrival of the prince; and Claassen

soon received a summons to attend him, which he obeyed with nervous alacrity.

As he entered the wide and straggling apartment, he instantly recognized Maurice, although the civilian's costume which he had worn in his stolen visit to Bruges in the character of Mynheer Hoogstraaten, was changed for the martial habiliments that suited him far better. He now occupied a high-backed chair, at the upper end of the table, from which the pewter measures and earthen mugs, and the streams of beer that had copiously been spilled from them, were hastily removed, as the carousing soldiers hurried out to the courtyard, to receive their general with due honours. On three or four stools at either side the prince, were as many grave looking personages, with dresses of a doubtful pattern, something (like their air and manner) of a camp costume grafted on city habits. These were the commissioners of the states ; and in his passing glance, Claassen thought he had seen one of them before. At the prince's

back, and grouped in various parts of the room, stood several officers in handsome uniforms, with scarfs, feathers, and embroidery, displayed in all the profusion of the prevailing fashions, none of their gay habiliments being concealed by armour, which was only worn on this occasion by the mounted guard, which surrounded the house and sent out patrols and videttes in various directions, to obviate an ambush or a surprise, the commonest among the tactics of those times. On one of the twisted and clumsily carved arms of the prince's chair sat, or rather lolled, a boy of about sixteen, half leaning against the back, and familiarly placing one hand on Maurice's shoulder, while the other held a rapier nearly as tall as himself, with which he played as though it were something more of a toy than a weapon of death. He was dressed in a plain buff suit without any ornament, but his bearing shewed that he was of higher rank than any of the decorated veterans, with Maurice's sole exception.

As Claassen was led forward by an officer, and

before he had time to finish his profound obeisance to the prince, the latter exclaimed in his usual abrupt tone, and in Flemish, which he spoke fluently,

“ Well, Mynheer Renault, so you too have turned renegade ! not content like your false sire with betraying the good cause, you have linked yourself to the tyrants’ ranks, and turned pander to one of their basest minions. You perceive I am not without news from Bruges, and so you cannot hope to deceive me. I tell you at once what I know of you—and now let me ask for what sinister purpose durst you seek an interview with me, and whence come you, for that I am yet to learn ?”

While poor Renault almost sank on the ground with confusion, under this burst of reproach, and the stern looks of the prince and his officers, the commissioners exchanged glances, pursed up their lips, and shook their heads, in disapprobation of Maurice’s style of interrogatory.

“ Ah,” whispered one to his next neighbour,

“it is not thus his sagacious father would have questioned a spy—fewer words and more management would have wormed the truth out of the craftiest that strove to circumvent the great William.”

“ Well, Mynheer Claassen, have you nothing to say ? Does the confusion of guilt strike you dumb ?” said Maurice.

“ No, your highness,” replied Renault, summoning up the whole strength of conscious innocence ; “ but your unlooked for, and most undeserved accusations overpower me—yet I feel that I shall presently be able to speak, and repel these slanders.”

A murmur ran round the military circle. The youth by Maurice’s side started up, and would have sprung upon the audacious young burgher, but Maurice caught his arm, and held him close to his side, while he smiled encouragingly on Renault, and looked significantly on those around him. He then said to the youth, whose arm he still held,

“ Look, my brother, on that young man’s face—and you, gentlemen all, learn a lesson in the open book of nature ! There is no falsehood in yon flushed cheek, nor in those full eyes : an honest man can never look calm and cool under a false accusation. Such is *my* way of discovering innocence—let more wily politicians boast of unmasking guilt ! Mynheer Claassen, make no reply to my reproaches, nor fear to have offended me by your bold and just retort. I have heard ill of you, ’tis true, but I believe it not. To *my* satisfaction at least that look disproves it quite. Cheer up then, and freely tell me how and why you are here?”

But gratitude and pleasure now for a while kept Renault speechless, as far different feelings had before. But he felt that he was not in a presence where weakness should be indulged ; and clearing his voice, he spoke again.

“ Your highness does me only justice, as at any time I can prove ; but I will not now intrude my insignificant justification upon you ; of my

father's conduct I must still less venture to speak. I should be the last to view too harshly what arose from anxious terrors at my danger—"

"Humph!" muttered the prince.

"Suffice it to say, that I am heart and soul devoted to the cause of my country, and your highness, and ready to lay down my life in the service of both."

"Enough, enough! you have my full confidence—go on—whence came you, Mynheer Renault?"

"Direct from Nimeguen, your highness, where I witnessed eight hours back a scene, which I grieve to be the first to report to you."

"Quick, then, let's hear it—bad news grows putrid in the keeping—what did you see in that strong hold of bigotry? Schenck has not failed in his projected attack?"

"I saw him, and hundreds of his brave followers, perish this morning in the unsuccessful attempt; and his quartered body is now fixed over the city gates."

These words created a burst of exclamation, and a display of gestures, which shewed the importance given by every listener to the fact related. Prince Maurice struck his clenched fist against the table : then put his open hand to his forehead ; and after a moment's pause, which was evidently occupied with more than mere individual matters, he exclaimed,

“ Good bye to Nimeguen ! A year's farewell to the Rhine ! The point is now decided. This, Mynheer Claassen, is bad news indeed. And so, my friends, Martin Schenck is gone. After four times changing sides, doing mischief to-day to those he fought for yesterday and would betray or battle for to-morrow, he has met his fate at last, and died by chance in the right cause. So much for the man. What more, Mynheer Claassen ? you have something to tell from Welbasch too ? you have I hope to strike a balance between good and evil tidings ? De Bassenveldt still holds out ? Why do you shake your head and look so foolish ? speak, I prithee ! ”

“Your highness must then bear with more than my foolish looks,” said Renault testily; “Welbasch Castle is sacked, and blown up from its deepest foundations. I saw it a mass of ruins.”

“What !” cried Prince Maurice, starting on his feet, “and the brave garrison? the glorious De Bassenveldt? Tell me, Sir, what of him? my noble young friend? is he safe—a prisoner—escaped?”

“Your highness asks more than I can answer. I fled from the smoking ruins as the assailants and defenders seemed alike destroyed in the terrible explosion, I—”

“And why did you fly, Sir? Why at least come before me with this vague account of so direful a calamity? Brave De Bassenveldt, and has this been thy fate! Cut off in the prime of life, the very spring-time of honour and fame! When did this happen, Sir? Are you sure you witnessed this?”

“Six days ago I saw what I relate,” said Renault tersely, neither having, nor assuming any sympathy with Prince Maurice’s grief, for the

rival whom he considered but as a bold libertine, quite forgetting, in his personal feelings, that he was a brave patriot as well."

"Six days ! and he has not joined me—then he *must* have perished !" said Maurice despondingly. "And now, Mynheer Claassen, that you have told me what you saw, and when it happened, and as I do give credit to all the woeful news of which you have been no niggard, pray tell me how it was that you were at all at Welbasch, and why, as I asked just now, you abandoned it at such a critical, such a fatal moment?"

"Your highness, I fear," replied Renault, somewhat softened again by this compliment to his veracity, "can look on me but as an ill-omened bird, croaking bad news into your princely ear, but it was no less my inclination than my duty to tell even the worst."

"What ! is there more coming ? Have you then worse to say—if worse than De Bassenveldt's destruction could befall ?"

"No, your highness—"

“Then speak to my questions, Sir, without more dallying—What made you at Welbasch? Why did you bend your course to Nimeguen? What brings you here?”

“Brief answers suit prompt questionings, and your highness shall be obeyed. I repaired to Welbasch Castle in the track of the assaulting foe, to rescue, if possible, a maiden of surpassing beauty and virtue from the seizure of its libertine lord. Heaven having aided my views, and thrown her into my protection, I, accompanied by a faithful follower of her house, took the course of the Meuse as the best route for safety; and furnished with a pass from Don Juan de Trovaldo, I traversed Brabant, and came by Nimeguen, in the hope of finding in Prince Maurice of Nassau a generous protector for the maiden, whose father once possessed, ay, and deserved his friendship.”

“By Saint George! Mynheer Claassen, your blunt bearing does not belie your birth-place nor your parentage. The sturdy burghers of Bruges

have always been ready enough to bandy words with their betters—ay, and blows too, I must admit. But let me tell you, young Sir, I do not like you the worse for this—and mayhap I have provoked it too. But this maiden of your chivalry—where is she, and who, since I have been so honoured by her father's friendship?"

"Ay, my good brother, where is she indeed? Let her be brought forward, that we may at least judge of her beauty, however we may take her virtue on the credit of her wandering knight," said Frederic-Henry, while all the younger, and not a few of the senior officers smiled at the boy-prince's vivacity, and looked anxious approbation of his request. But Maurice assumed a grave aspect to check the growing licence of look and speech.

"Brother," said he, "this is scarcely meet, when we learn the ruin of two of our bravest officers, the death of at least one, and the destruction of the only effective hope which we had for the liberation of Brabant. Nor, let me add, gentlemen, is it seemly to encourage an unthinking boy in his

gibing discourse on any female, but particularly on one who, it appears, is in want of protection—the more so as she is represented to be young and beautiful? I will see, Mynheer Claassen, this damsel of your care-taking, and if she be indeed the daughter of a former friend, she may reckon on my aid. Let some one shew me to the apartment of this young lady.”

While Maurice rose from his seat, and an attendant officer prepared to lead him to Theresa, Frederic-Henry, and several of the officers, indulged in various quirks and quibbles. The young prince said, quite loud enough to be heard by Maurice, whom he loved with an affection half brotherly, half filial, but whom he stood in no awe of,

“Aha! there goes Scipio—or Solomon—which must we call him, De Grimberghe? What will sister Gertrude say, when I tell her this? Come, Barneveldt, let's follow him, and be ready to rescue the lady—see how frightened the young burgher looks!”

Maurice would not have heeded these pert sallies, nor the suspicion of his military suite, to whom his gallantries were no secret. But his quick eye caught an expression on the grave faces of the commissioners, as if they disapproved his questionable visit to the damsel, and were disappointed themselves at the failure of Frederic-Henry's proposal. He knew that at that critical moment it behoved him to stand well with the grey or grisly bearded junta, who watched all his movements, both in morals and war, with a jealous scrutiny. He therefore stopped, turned short, and said,

“On second thoughts it may be well that I do not see this maiden alone. Too many recent instances have we had that beauty may be the mask of deceit and the lure for weakness, and I must not trust my judgment or my steadiness on a point so trying. We will therefore all receive the lady here—and let none forget her sex or her situation? Conduct her hither with all decorous courtesy!”

As an officer retired in obedience to this order, Maurice resumed his seat, casting a look of severe reproof on his volatile brother, and one little less so on the young men whom he had addressed by name, and who had shewn no discouragement to his sallies. Renault Claassen's trembling joints and flushed countenance, shewed the anxiety with which he awaited Theresa's entrance, for he had recognised among the prince's train one at least whom his apprehensions told him might prove a redoubtable obstacle to his hopes.

In a few minutes Theresa entered, ushered by the officer, and accompanied by the woman, whose presence was the only semblance she could obtain of female protection. The day was not long gone by when Theresa would have been overpowered with confusion at braving the scrutiny of such an assemblage as she now came before. But she took her place on the chair offered to her by Prince Maurice's orders, with a cold indifference that seemed to many of the sneering and libertine observers indicative of a

hardihood very remote from modesty or virtue. Renault Claassen approached her, and spoke a few cheering words, too low for others to hear; and she raised on him, in return, one of those looks of pensive and grateful acknowledgement which sunk so deeply and so deceivingly into his heart, and which possessed an expression of ineffable sweetness that not an individual present could now resist being affected by in various degrees. Maurice himself, who had meant to set an example of the coldest decorum and formality, was so struck with the beauty and grace of the lovely girl, that he rose from his seat, took off his plumed hat, and respectfully bowing came close up to her and said,

“Young lady, your mien and the expression of those looks, speak too plainly your station of life and your state of feeling to allow me to treat you with aught but the most distinguished respect. You know that you are addressed by Maurice of Nassau—who, then, has *he* the honour of addressing?”

With these words, and before Theresa could succeed in forcing up a sentence of reply, he gently took her hand which she had placed on her breast as if to aid the utterance of her thoughts. The involuntary pressure of his fingers, which were moved at once by gallantry and pity, touched the spring that acted on the machinery of a ring of curious construction, a great curiosity of the times, and which Theresa had worn for several weeks past, not a little proud of the source from which she derived it.

“One ! two ! three !” said the tiny bell of the diminutive repeater, which was then thought a most seemly, as it was a costly, ornament for a lady’s thumb. At the fairy sounding of the hour the prince startled, and quickly raised the lovely hand, to convince another sense besides feeling and hearing, and then exclaimed,

“Why—how—what ! It is my own ring—my gift to Van Rozenhoed’s fair daughter ! And do I indeed see before me the beautiful Heiress of Bruges ? Theresa ! She whom report at least has

made the wife of Baron de Roulemonde, in this destitute state—without equipage or servants the wandering companion of a young burgher! How came this to pass? Explain, young lady, these strange discrepancies, for your father's and your honour's sake"

At Prince Maurice's announcement of Theresa's identity every one present crowded round, to gain a nearer view of one so celebrated, and whose adventures had formed a chief topic of gossip, misconception and surmise, in court, camp and city, for the last three months. Foremost among the throng of anxious faces was that of a young officer, whose decoration of a silver key dangling at his breast announced him to be one of the prince's chamberlains—the same Arnoul de Grimberghe who had owed his appointment to the interest of his old master, Van Rozenhoed, and who had been one of the first among the candidates for Theresa's hand in the presentation of suitors at Rozenhoed House. He now shoved aside with little ceremony young Barneveldt and

various other scions of the first families in Holland, who served in the Dutch army. Even the rank of Frederick-Henry did not meet with more respect, and it was only Prince Maurice's rebuking look that made Arnoul stop short at his side, and content himself with gazing at Theresa over his general's shoulder.

“Stand back, gentlemen, the young lady is oppressed by this uncourteous ardour,” said Maurice, motioning back the circle, which retreated several steps, all but the young chamberlain, who maintained his post. Theresa meanwhile, after various ineffectual efforts to speak, mingled with imploring looks on the prince, as if praying his consideration, turned at last towards Claassen, and by a significant gesture entreated him to be the medium of the required explanations. Maurice acting on this expressed wish, turned attentively to Claassen, and motioned him to speak.

“It is indeed the lovely daughter of Van Rozenhoed who now claims your highness's

protection,” said Renault ; “ report has spoken falsely, in giving her to the blackest villain that walks the earth. She would die sooner than wed Lyderic de Roulemonde, though the power of the archdukes has commanded the sacrifice. Van Rozenhoed, entrapped by the tyrants, and I speak it with shame, denounced by my own father, is now their prisoner in Brussels—his property no doubt confiscated, and his daughter, as you see her, forlorn and desolate, seeking the shelter of a cloister, and though lately so rich, so sought for, now reduced to the poor protection of an humble friend, and one old servant—”

“ No, by Heavens she is not !” exclaimed Arnoul de Grimberghe, rushing in front of the circle, and addressing the words which followed, by turns to Maurice, Theresa, and the company at large—“ No, my prince, it shall never be said that she whom I admired and sought in splendid wealth, the child of my benefactor and best friend, shall find me shrink back in the

hour of reverse and ruin. I here solemnly renew my well-known offer for her hand; I throw myself humbly at her feet, and make my unworthy proposal; and I call all present to witness it, and to hold me pledged to keep it good, though a stuyver nor a gem of her once unbounded dower be forthcoming or in chance of recovery !”

The generous youth then knelt before Theresa, while his beaming looks shewed a fine and ennobling contrast to his light and careless bearing, when he asked her hand in the full tide of her prosperity. Theresa returned his looks by one of speaking sensibility—her eyes filled—her lips moved—but no word came forth to soften the rejection of the disinterested offer, which it was however plain she did not entertain for an instant.

While the prince gave his hand to the young chamberlain, and uttered a short expression of approval and praise, a tall personage, of lank aspect and formal demeanour, stepped forth and said,

“Most noble prince, let me in my turn be heard; while a stripling like this sets such an example, can Cornelis Van der Gobble hang back?—No—I am now ready to fulfil in serious proof, the offer of my poor person and not quite despicable fortune, which I too made—but as your highness knows, with no intent or hope of its acceptance by this fair damsel—in honour of her virtue and beauty, and of her father’s name.”

This solemn proposition on the part of “the lank commissioner,” as Van der Gobble was familiarly called, excited amusement, that was not unmixed with a chivalric excitement among the warrior audience; and it is possible that Theresa, forlorn and destitute as she now was, might have been assailed by as numerous a tribe of suitors as had offered to her on a more memorable occasion, had not Prince Maurice observed the deep pain which this last speech caused her, and hastily turned the tide of gallantry.

“Gentlemen, this is but right and fair—wor-

thy of manly spirits as ye both prove yourselves, and the lady who hears your offers, shall under my guarantee decide on them in fitting time and place. But still there was one whose claims may yet exist, in force too powerful to allow much hope for the acceptance of yours. Say, Mynheer Claassen, as you are the lady's spokesman, how stands my friend De Bassenveldt in her regard?"

"As high in her admiration, I believe, as one can whom she has never seen."

"Not see him—though you said erewhile he had forcibly seized and held her in his castle! How's this?"

"Purposes of his own, unknown to me, your highness, have guided a conduct of mixed violence and forbearance, which I have no means to unravel."

Maurice paused awhile, and cast a keen look at Theresa, and watched her narrowly while he spoke again—

"I must not keep up this questioning, which agitates her whom my wish is to tranquillize and

serve to the utmost. But yet in the duty of the guardianship which Providence seems to have devolved on me, I must know as best I can the state of her heart and desires. There are honourable offers for her hand, while present events cannot allow of a decision. She shall therefore rest in my charge, and Holland holds forth fair security for one so precious and so fair."

At these words, which intimated the frustration of Theresa's only hope—the sanctuary of her early friends, the good nuns of St. Anne, she rose from her seat, and throwing herself at his feet, caught his hand, and suddenly uttered in tones of poignant anguish,

"In mercy, send me to my cloister—it is my only wish—my last hope!"

Maurice seemed struck forcibly by this terse but most eloquent appeal. Whatever his previous cogitations had been, they were evidently much disconcerted. He still held her hand, as he raised her up, and one arm circled her waist with a respectful clasp. He paused again, as if

he calculated some difficult point of belief; and again he spoke, half to her and half to Claassen, while his eye was intently fixed on her alone,

“ One more question I must put, to understand the mystery of this maiden’s feelings. How beats her heart, in indifference or sympathy, with the gentle suit of Master Lambert Boonen ?”

No sooner had he pronounced this name than he felt the fair form within his clasp shudder in every fibre. No scream burst from the lips—no tear started to the eye—but a sigh, that spoke the heart’s depth of anguish, trembled as it escaped her almost bursting bosom.

“ Good God ! she faints ! Room—air—water !” cried Maurice, in manly emotion, carrying his insensible burthen out to the court-yard ; while the bystanders hurried in search of remedies, with an intense haste, seldom excited in those familiar with battle and death.

“ Ah, Mynheer Claassen,” continued Maurice, while poor Renault knelt, despairingly, beside the beautiful object of his devotion, “ Ah, then, I

have struck the true chord of her grief—God pity her, and pardon me, if my abruptness has done her harm ! Tell me, then, how is this ? Her heart is given to Boonen ? Is it so ? Give me this clue to a wild mystery.”

“ Her heart is indeed in Lambert Boonen’s grave !” murmured Claassen.

“ What, then, is he dead ?” said the prince, in a quick whisper, which delicacy towards Theresa kept from more emphatic utterance.

“ She saw him destroyed in the explosion, and buried beneath the ruins of Welbasch !” again exclaimed Claassen, in an agitated under-tone.

“ Then, my friends, since this, indeed, be so,” rejoined Maurice, “ this scene may finish here—and all who feel with me, may well wear mourning !”

He then gently disencumbered himself of Theresa, who was received into Renault Claassen’s trembling arms ; and in a tone of more seriousness than he had used during the whole conference, he added,

“ This painful drama of untoward love draws to its close. Poor girl ! nothing, indeed, shall contravene her sad desire. When this passes over, and she is in a state to move, let her be brought to my quarters, and after a night’s rest she may be able to resume her course. I see the maiden no more ! nor do I shame to say that her excellent charms are the cause of this resolve. It must be a colder pulse than mine that would not throb quick under their influence. I now know her secret, although but half revealed. Now is no time for solving riddles, though this adventure might grace the pages of romance.

“ Mynheer Claassen, it is plain how your heart stands in this affair. But you shall not be balked in your completion of an honourable task. Pursue your journey, and resume your charge, with the faithful servant who has hitherto kept convoy with you. The way is now clear up to the very walls of Bruges. An escort of fifty lances shall bear you company to-morrow, nor quit you until you are in the banlieue of the Franc. Arnoul

de Grimberghe, you shall command the escort—you are worthy of the post. Now, gentlemen all, to our quarters! This evening you shall know important plans, on which this last hour has had no trifling influence. Let some one go on towards Nimeguen, for all details of Schenck's mishap—the rest follow me to the camp!”

In a few minutes the prince, having seen that Theresa was gradually recovering from the shock, and that a litter was ready for her conveyance, mounted his horse, and galloped off, leaving Claassen, Brocklaer, and every necessary assistance to attend her removal.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER a night of calm suffering to Theresa, of anxious solicitude to so many who now sympathized with her misfortunes, and of considerable bustle and important preparation on the part of the whole army, the morning at length broke, in the propitious glow of midsummer, to enable all to follow their several destinations, on the longest day, and under the brightest sky of the year.

A better equipment than they had hitherto journeyed with was now, by the prince's care, ready for Theresa and her attendant guides. A palfrey of gentler breed and beseeemingly caparisoned, re-

placed her jaded jennet. Two others were prepared for Claassen and Brocklaer. Arnoul de Grimberghe, at the head of his gallant band of lancers, paraded in front of the old and castellated chateau where Maurice had for some time held his quarters, the best suit of whose apartments had been now given up to Theresa's occupation, and where Gertrude Van Mechlen, the devoted companion of the prince, had herself presided over every arrangement for our poor heroine's comfort, without one pang of jealousy, and without intruding her own appearance on her.

The lark that in the ecstasy of song fluttered his pinions towards the morn, was not more matinal than the wretched maiden, for whom all the cares of manly chivalry and female tenderness could not obtain an hour's repose or a moment of joy. She was ready for departure with the dawn; and when she mounted her palfrey, she saw the arrangements for her honourable treatment, if not with total indifference, at least without pride or pleasure.

As the little cavalcade with its attendant guard moved away, every token of interest and respect was evinced by the individuals of the prince's household. Gertrude Van Mechlen, in all but the sanctifying forms of the church his wife, and in all else a model for many a legitimate partner of prince, peer, or peasant, watched from a window, with her handmaids, the departure of her who had so excited her feelings without alarming her passions. Theresa, depressed and absorbed as she was, was nevertheless too much imbued with innate feelings of delicacy and kindness, not to appreciate that which was thus shewn to her; and she bowed profoundly and gracefully to the remarkable woman, whom the will of her lover and the word of a priest might have in one minute made a princess, as was more than once on the point of being accomplished during Maurice's long attachment.

As the cavalcade wound along the road towards Husden, the direction of their route into Flanders, they saw in full display the brilliant spectacle of

the army of the States, in the act of being reviewed by their renowned general, previous to their departure on an expedition which was ere many days to make all Europe ring with the echo of their fame. That veteran army, composed of the finest elements of martial greatness, now stood in serried ranks, or marched with firm step before the hero, to whom almost every individual was personally known, and who had shared in almost every perilous exploit by which they had earned such an honour. Even young Claassen's heart, albeit not framed of warlike impulses, throbbed quickly as he gazed in admiration on the sight; and Jans Brocklaer himself, as he peered cunningly into the various divisions, half wished that he had been bred a soldier.

This celebrated army consisted of small contingents, epitomes as they might fairly be called, of the most renowned nations of Europe. Holland and Zealand, with the other states of the union, the most deeply pledged in the great contest which was in agitation, were amply represented by the columns

forming the main force of the army, commanded by Louis, Ernest, and Justin of Nassau, the three Counts de Solms, Oliver Van den Temple, and various others of note. The other quotas were composed of four thousand English under Francis and Horace Vere, those celebrated brothers, former companions of Sydney the second Bayard, and whose talent and courage were conspicuous during years of warfare; a thousand Scotch, led on by the gallant Colonel Edmonds; as many Swiss, the first who had served in the Dutch armies, headed by the brave Hans Kriech, whose conduct, though a simple peasant, insured him a monument; several regiments of French and Germans; and finally twelve hundred Walloons of the revolted garrison of St. Andrew, who, formed into a regiment, of which young Frederick-Henry was appointed colonel, were distinguished from the gay uniforms and mailed coats of the rest, by plain buff suits, the only clothing that could be hastily procured, to replace the rags in which they had been left by the default

of pay while in the service of the archdukes. Attached to the staff of Prince Maurice were the Prince of Anhalt, the Duke of Holstein, Count Coligny, nephew of the famous admiral, Lord Gray, and various other young men of distinguished rank, who all flocked to the low countries to learn the art of war under the most celebrated captain of the day. Of these various materials was composed this famous army ; but all so organised, so disciplined, so accustomed to obey their common chief and to fight side by side, that no difference existed but of uniform and language and no rivalry but the generous emulation of honour.

As Renault Claassen, slowly riding beside Theresa, turned round, and still slackened his horse's speed, to gaze awhile longer on this proud array, the whole was in the act of defiling before the prince general, for he had been, since day-break, on the ground passing them in review. And now, as the spectacle concluded, his quick glance turning from the plain where their manœuvres had

taken place, he espied the little cortège, followed by the lancers, whom De Grimberghe retained at such a distance behind as not to press on, or intrude too near the fair charge they were meant to protect, but not embarrass. In a moment an aide-de-camp darted from Maurice's side, and riding up to Renault, told him that his highness desired to have speech with him. Renault, dazzled by the imposing display of the prince's power, and somewhat nervous under the recollection of his blunt and authoritative demeanour, made ready to obey this new summons with the best face he could. Instructing Brocklaer to ride slowly on beside his young mistress, he accompanied the aide-de-camp to the group, in which the prince was easily distinguished from all (even the others of the house of Nassau wearing, like him, the orange panache and scarf) by their air of anxious subordination, and his own of simple dignity.

“ Good morrow, Mynheer Claassen !” said he, with the frank and cordial tone, which, when he chose it, put all men at their ease in his presence.

“ Good morrow, and good speed to you and your lovely charge. I have only stopped your journey now to say one word, which the scene of yesterday and the news you brought me, left no time to speak. You are now on the way to your native town—you will find it, I fear, in a state of sad commotion, the unrighteous cause of tyranny and corruption holding the upper hand. Please Heaven, they shall not keep it long! You will tell your brother burghers the goodly sight you now behold; and say that, let me and my brave army be where we may, let the designs of the states and our allies be shrouded in whatever secrecy good policy requires, the day of deliverance for Flanders can never be distant, if freedom is in the hearts of her citizens, and prudence resume her place in their heads. You may so do much for the cause, and redeem the wrong which has been done it, while you repair an individual ill in one generation, by the services you render in another. Commend me to the lovely Theresa—and mind ye that you and my amorous chamberlain hold no

rivalry on the road but in most meet discretion ; nor strive to halt the pious maid, on the pilgrimage of seclusion from the world which its miseries have driven her to !”

With these words the prince turned away towards another part of the field, leaving Renault deeply blushing at the sagacity which seemed to have penetrated his secret hopes, and too much confused to have uttered a reply even to the early part of the speech, which had reference to matters not so pointedly personal. Ashamed, however, of remaining alone, while many of the young officers turned glances on him and smiles at each other as they rode off, he too wheeled round his steed, and soon resumed his place by the side of her whose presence made him forget all the world beside.

The journey all the way into the very territory of the Franc of Bruges was unvaried by any circumstance that might make any one league more interesting than the rest. The flat scenery, unchanging weather, and the monotonous demeanour

of the party, all harmonized with the sad tone of feeling which men and nature seemed alike to take from her who was the chief object of the scene. The country was deserted ; the roads unpeopled ; the towns were in keeping of their inhabitants, the scanty troops of the archdukes uninfected by mutiny being all drawn away towards Brabant ; and the timid burghers who kept watch on their ramparts shewed no disposition to hazard a sortie, or risk an encounter with what might be the advance of a hostile army. It was thus that small bands of soldiers like those of De Grimberghe, frequently during those wars traversed whole districts, passing by a hostile population of thousands shut up inactively within their walls.

During the whole route the two young guardians of our and their heroine observed towards each other a sullen civility, which respect for her, rather than reciprocal regard, kept within its bounds. Arnoul de Grimberghe looked on the burgher with all the pride of rank ; and the sturdy independence of Renault Claassen's class was not ren-

dered less than usually uncompromising in its present representative, who considered his escort and forced companion on this occasion as a type of the haughty noblesse with whom his ancestors had held many a hard struggle for privilege and power, which, however, they were always ready to abandon when the common enemy assailed them. Had therefore a troop of Spanish or Italian mercenaries attacked young Grimberghe and his "plump of spears," Renault would have no doubt taken a brand and fought valiantly by his side. But as no such accident varied the tenor of their march, they parted as they had met, without any approach towards friendship, and with no overt act of enmity.

The young chamberlain had observed towards Theresa the most delicate demeanour, carefully fulfilling his duty, and not even once obtruding himself on her company, beyond the times in which he joined in the repasts which his men provided at their different halting stations. In fact, he was quite easy under her virtual rejection of his offer.

He had made it in a moment of ardent feeling, and would have gladly fulfilled it for honour's sake. But his heart was untouched even by Theresa's charms. He was not a youth to sigh and pine for hopeless love, and he would carelessly have seen the prize carried from him, by one whom he considered so much his inferior as Renault Claassen, or even by the grotesque Van der Gobble, the motives of whose renewed proposals we shall by and by have occasion to explain.

De Grimberghe had hoped to gain the term of his expedition on the third day; but when he arrived at the last safe station which he and his lancers could occupy for the night, it was too late for Theresa and Claassen to reach Bruges before the hour at which the gates were closed. The party therefore halted at the farm house fixed on for that purpose, and after due placing of guards and such preparations as safety required, retired to rest. The close neighbourhood to the territory of the Franc made this the most hazardous position yet encountered; and De Grimberghe did not for

a moment suffer his eyes to wink, nor quit his post of observation, till the bright streaks of morning broke upon the doubtful twilight which had never given place to actual darkness. But the state of the city gave ample employment to those within, and left the environs undisturbed, and Arnoul with no opportunity for proving more than his prudence. In a few minutes of preparation, horses were saddled and men ready ; and the road to the city being now clear, De Grimberghe prepared for his leave-taking, as soon as Theresa was fairly within the territory of Bruges. She was soon beyond the boundary line, marked by a few painted posts, and the young chamberlain, after a courteous speech of farewell, answered by repeated gestures of grateful acknowledgment from Theresa, wheeled round to retrace his steps, exchanging cold salutations with Renault, who gave the last garniture of his purse in largess to the soldiers. Ere the cloud of dust thrown up by the retreating troop was out of sight, the now unguarded trio were close to the first outpost of the city, whose three

or four massive spires stood vaguely in the morning mist, o'ertopped by one battlemented tower of surpassing height and beauty, its granite coronel gemmed by the crimson beams which the yet unrisen sun threw from below the horizon.

Renault was somewhat surprised to find that not only the outposts but even the city gates were guarded by Spanish soldiers, who had replaced the burgher trained-bands by which that duty had been performed, even before Trovaldo and his few troops were called off to the army. Not one of the municipal authorities, usually attending to receive and examine strangers, were now to be seen ; but the party was admitted, with scrutiny so slight as scarcely to deserve the name. Renault's inquiries into this state of loose discipline from the subaltern in command at the gate, obtained him the information that the city had at its urgent request obtained a strong garrison from Brussels ; that the whole population, including every official person, was at that moment poured into the streets and squares, to witness the sun-rise procession of

the governor and burgomasters, to hear a solemn Te Deum in honour of Schenck's defeat and death, and De Bassenveldt's destruction, which were that morning to be celebrated in every town of Flanders and Brabant. "And in addition," said the officer, "to these glorious triumphs of the royal army, it is notorious that the force of the bold rebel Maurice is utterly dispersed and driven before that of the Count de Berg, so that every loyal subject may well abandon himself to rejoicing. On, on then, and you may catch the procession before it enters the cathedral. Hark ! there is the crash of the music. The sackbuts and trumpets sound the march ! Life of my saint ! how unlucky that I should be on duty ! Turn out, soldiers, and down on your knees. The blessed image of our Lady and the sacred Host are abroad !"

While the pious cut-throats obeyed, halbert and arquebuss in hand, and Jans Brocklaer, a good catholic, duly crossed himself at the sounding of the little bell which confirmed the latter part of the Spanish officer's speech, Claassen feigned a sym-

pathy with these rites, which as a staunch Lutheran he cordially hated ; and for caution sake he quitted his horse and requested Theresa to let him assist her to dismount from her's. She tacitly obeyed the suggestion, following all through her long journey the counsels of her devoted protector, and her mind being now immersed in quiet resignation at the approaching fulfilment of her vow. Renault hastily handed over the bridle to Brocklaer, directing him to make the best of his way to his father's house in Tanner's street. He then pulled up his short cloak close to the ruff that stood high round his face, and dragging the leaf of his hat over his brow, he hoped to pass unnoticed through the crowd. He gently assisted Theresa in somewhat similar efforts at concealment, closing the hood of her travelling mantle upon her head. Then urging the necessity of great caution, he placed her arm under his, and both their hearts throbbing high, but from far different feelings, they took their way through one of the narrow streets which led the most directly to his father's residence.

But their progress was soon stopped by the crowds that poured out from every side towards the quarter in which “Notre Dame,” is situated, and which they were obliged to traverse to gain the only refuge where they could find safety. Had Renault’s object been at once to place Theresa in the convent, he might easily have passed by another route, and reached the remote and quiet quarter of *Ouden Zac*. But a still unformed project, which he dared not venture to acknowledge to himself, much less to act on, increased his confused fear of being discovered, and having Theresa snatched from his side; and he allowed himself and his helpless companion to be hustled along through by-lanes and passages, with the current of the crowd, till at length they found themselves suddenly borne out upon the open quay called the *Duyver*, mentioned in our earliest chapters, at one end of which is situated the cathedral of Notre Dame, and the whole of which commands a full view of Rozenhoed-house and its surrounding scenery, formerly described.

As they stood there, unwilling to move further and unable to retrace their way into the secrecy of the obscure passages they had just come through, the procession, at that moment crossing the bridge over the canal communicating between Rozenhoed quay, and the street leading to the great square, burst upon their view, causing to both a pang of surprise and terror. For while loud shouts from the mob, blended the titles of the governor and the chief burgomaster, they too plainly distinguished in the first the person of Lyderic de Roulemonde, and in the latter that of Claas Claassen.

Lyderic's appearance was splendid as he rode along in the dark pride of power. The plain rough figure of the old tanner, was strikingly contrasted with his; but there was in both an evident air of swaggering and uneasy effort, in filling the new characters to which they were raised by dishonour and guilt. The pageant moved glittering on—priests, relics, banners, the heads of the various *gulden* or trades, and then

the main personages in all the pomp of official accoutrement ; while Renault and Theresa stood involuntarily fixed, he with agitated surprise and she with quiet dread. Had even the way been open for escape, neither had power to stir ; for the natural energy of her character seemed paralyzed as by a spell, and his fleeting possession of that faculty, as occasionally evinced on their journey, was quite withered in the influence of his actual situation.

Lyderic's sidelong glance stealing through the crowd, in search of the usual homage to personal advantages and high station, discovered a damning tribute to his influence, in the pale and statue-like features and form of Theresa, fixedly gazing on his basilisk look, and in the flushed confusion of Renault, who had not presence of mind enough to cast his towards the earth. Lyderic betrayed no token of surprise at this discovery. He felt an instant sensation of triumph, on finding Theresa within his reach, accompanied by a pang of mean remorse, at the memory of Beatrice and

her scorn. But his countenance shewed no change. He bit his lip, and his brow lowered on his unspeaking eyes—but this seemed the trick of habit, rather than the effort of feeling. He looked slightly at young Claassen, whom he had no doubt had willingly led Theresa into his power, and he attributed the youth's confusion to the sight of his father. He coolly turned with some casual observation to the renegade burgomaster, and went on his way to the church, making sure that the son would after the ceremony put him in possession of the hostage whose fate he had had no means of tracing, and whose recovery seemed as a new wave in the tide of success that flowed so rapidly on him.

Now was the moment for Renault Claassen to have fulfilled his mission, by placing Theresa in the holy sanctuary, which not even the power of the governor might dare to violate openly. And had Renault been actuated by only a pure spirit of devotion to her, he would have taken advantage of the time and hastened to the convent.

But we have seen that the leaven of selfish passion was in his heart ; and in the weakness of his nature he clung to the hope of making her his own. He had not the vigour of intellect which sees the crisis when a beloved object *must* be given up, and commands the sacrifice of one's own happiness as essential to the security of her's. He could not imagine the perspective of long years soothed by the pride of such a sacrifice ; but rather than forego another day of lingering dalliance near her, he held her ready for the ruin he had not energy to obviate.

Irresolute, and quailing under the effect of astonishment and apprehension, Renault made no effort to escape from the pressure of the crowd ; and the rapture of feeling that Theresa's passive form was indeed beside him, completed the paralysis of thought and left him incapable of reflection or reason. As they stood thus, or rather moved with the throng towards the church, which the procession had now entered, its direction suddenly changed, and the living flood was hurried

back with reffluent force, by the rush of a band of ruffians, armed with hatchets, staves and lighted brands, who had only waited till the church received the military and civil dignitaries, to effect a purpose which one of them had not only approved but projected.

“ To Rozenhoed House! To Rozenhoed House! Plunder and burn! Death to the traitor! Claas Claassen for ever!” and various such frantic cries, sounded the key-note of that ever jangling and discordant instrument, the popular voice. Ere time was given for thought or for escape, the well-trained horde swept furiously by, and Theresa could not shut out the view of her paternal home and the chief object of her proud inheritance in flame and smoke, while from every door and window most costly articles were flung out in the fierce rage of sack and rapine.

“ Heaven and the holy saints protect my father!” ejaculated Theresa, with eyes upturned, and her hands crossed on her heaving breast.

“ Her father !” cried some of the crowd, who all seemed to applaud the mischief, with that perverse sympathy in violence and injustice which always actuates masses of men—“ Who is her father ? Can she be the gold-beater’s daughter ? Is this the traitor’s child ?”

These fearful questions and the murmur that arose made Renault Claassen thrill with dread ; and grown cunning by its impulse, he tore off Theresa’s mantle and threw it away, at the same instant flinging his own hat and cloak on the ground ; and thus less distinguished than before from the plainly or half-dressed artisans around him, he snatched Theresa from the throng and escaped with her, more successfully unnoticed than had they affected concealment or disguise. A few minutes brought them to Tanner’s-street. Renault scarcely recognised his father’s house, now decorated (and, as he felt, disgraced) with garlands and festoons, while an arch of triumph spanned the street, covered with distichs of damning praise, such as the teeming venality of scrib-

blers holds ready in every age and for the basest men.

Renault interposed his person between Theresa and these trophies of his father's treachery, and led her through a low passage, the door of which was surmounted by a huge effigy of an ox's head, painted to the life, and denoting the craft to which the new chief magistrate belonged. Through this passage they soon reached the tan-yard, where heaps of hides, undressed and clotted with blood, or bleaching by the open pits, and mountains of bark in its dry or saturated state, blocked up the way, and sent out a mixture of putrid and bitter smells. No living thing was to be seen but two huge dogs whose wooden houses stood at either side the path, and whose chains allowed them just to reach its limits to terrify but not harm the passers, like the growling monsters of a fairy tale. On the present occasion they grinned horrible welcomings to young Renault, howling and rattling their chains as they bounded with ferocious joy. He hurried Theresa through this dis-

gusting scene, and led her into a low pavilion, the old burgher's "bower," overlooking a stagnant canal, the receptacle of all the dregs from the nauseous industry of the neighbourhood.

"Thank Heaven! you are safe and secret here," said Renault, panting, and offering a seat to Theresa.

"And why here?" asked she in a faint and faltering voice. But her companion, not less moved by the now unusual sound of that voice, whose tones thrilled through him, than confused at the simple question it uttered, was in his turn unable to reply.

"Why not lead me to my convent?" asked Theresa, as if the words were expressed with a painful effort.

Renault stammered a sentence of which she could just distinguish "danger, crowd, De Roulemonde," vaguely combining to make out a case of urgency for her present situation; and he then hastily added,

"But now I fly to see what may be snatched

from the ruin of your house—what is there most dear to you that I may attempt to save?”

“My father, my father! think only of him!” exclaimed Theresa. But Renault had no hope of saving him, if he were indeed returned to Bruges, as the shouts of the mob seemed to say. He knew too well the spirit of its factious rabble, to dream of snatching a victim from their fury. He therefore made no answer to Theresa, whom he considered as already fatherless; but fastening the door carefully, and closing the window of the pavilion on the side next the yard, he sallied forth into the street.

For half an hour after his departure, Theresa suffered a revival of that intense anxiety of which for so many past days she had seemed incapable. Her father's supposed danger made her feel as though new born to the acute distresses of humanity. Confused noises broke on her at times—then a dead pause—then shouts and yells; in each of which she fancied the sentence of his death. Remorse at having ever for a moment suffered other feelings to overpower

her affection for him, added new torments to her suspense ; and thus worked up almost to phrenzy, she at length resolved to attempt an escape from the pavilion, and rush at once into the streets, to know and brave the worst that could befall.

Finding the door fast, she looked from the window that opened on the canal, to see if any means of egress were likely in that direction ; and with a thrill of pleasure, she discovered on the opposite side Jans Brocklaer, unmooring a little boat from the wall that bounded a straggling waste ground through which he had made his way. He cast across the canal a reconnoitring but terrified glance, and discovered Theresa's agitated face, as she leaned from the window, and imploringly motioned his approach. A strong shove against the wall made the boat dart across, and Jans, springing on the stair that communicated with the pavilion, was, as quick as fear could urge him, within the open window, and crouching low in a corner.

A few words of explanation told that he had

been recognised in the streets as a follower of Van Rozenhoed, had seen the house in flames, escaped from the fury of the mob, and letting the horses adrift among them, made the best of his way by an indirect route to his rendezvous with Renault Claassen. Theresa lost no time in idle questions. She saw that the man was scarcely coherent in thought or words. Once more then her native spirit, still unsubdued by suffering, prompted her to immediate and independent action.

“Come,” cried she, “follow me; I go to seek my father!”

In a moment she had passed from the window upon the platform from which the flight of stone-steps led to the canal. The bewildered Brocklaer scarcely comprehended her words or her purpose. But a new alarm urged his obedience to her call, for the terrific howlings of the two mastiffs in the yard without, announced the approach of some one—and who is not dangerous to a coward’s imagining? While Jans still hesitated and trembled, the unwieldy workmanship of the door fastenings

began to play outside ; and then he sprang out of the window, and hurried down the stair after Theresa. The door of the pavilion opened : a rapid foot was heard on the floor, and then a bound from the window, betokening immediate pursuit. Theresa reached the lower step ; and preparing to throw herself into the little boat, she saw with a pang of despair that it had floated down the canal, and was quite beyond her reach. In another instant she was clasped in the arms of Renault Claassen, while poor Brocklaer, at the sight of an active pursuer, had closed his eyes, and put up his hands in silent solicitings for mercy.

Renault bore his recovered prize to the pavilion again, and shutting the door, he threw himself on his knees before her, seized her hand, and exclaimed, in a scarce articulate voice,

“ Best, and most adored being, this is the crisis of my fate and of yours. I have reached the height of daring, in the fear of having lost you. Now, then, let me speak ! De Roulemonde comes to snatch you from me—can you submit to such

a fate? There is but one way, one moment for escape—will you fly with me?”

“ Yes, to my father’s arms—or to the convent’s shelter.”

“ No, no, Theresa, it is now too late—it must be with me, for me alone—far from this terrible place. Of your father I can learn nothing—I fear the worst ! The convent is utterly beyond your reach—the road is filled by Roulemonde and his creatures—the moment gone by. I have, with two steady friends, secured fresh horses—the gates are open—the way is wide—I am provided with all means—you must, you will be mine ! This is no time to hesitate—fly with me, Theresa, and be happy.”

“ Happy !” exclaimed the astonished yet indignant girl—“ happy with another—with *you*, while *his* image lives and breathes in my heart ! Stand back, Sir, and let me pass ! Oh God ! Is there then no faith, no honour in mortal man !”

Thus speaking, she walked with an air of resistless dignity out into the yard, where Brock-

laer, who had stood there trembling, intuitively followed her steps. The young tanner, dashed at once from the height of hope and daring to which he had rashly ventured, also followed her, like the culprit of the eastern tale, doomed to move as the shadow of the bright spirit he had dared to love. He was utterly paralyzed by her one short phrase, her one brief look. His horses were ready—his friends prepared—his mind, as he believed, made up—yet he dared not act. In such a crisis it is only a bold breach of decorum that suits the lover's need—an ardent violence, which may shock at first, but which may be atoned for by the force of the passion that at once emboldens and subdues him. But Renault Claassen was not suited for such passages of life and love.

Theresa walked safely past the dogs, who gazed surlily but mutely on her. She cleared the passage; and just as she reached the street, she saw before her, and was at once discovered by De Roulemonde and Claas Claassen, as they returned from the thanksgiving in all the pomp of their

respective state. Lyderic immediately dismounted from his horse, and all glittering in finery, he stalked with a haughty step to Theresa and took her by the hand, while the variety of her agitation left her scarce power to attempt its removal from his grasp.

“Why here, my fair fugitive? The governor’s palace were more fitting,” said he with the insolence of pride—“and you, my trusty agent,” he continued as Renault appeared, “how is this? Is this filthy den of stinking trade the place where you should have led my affianced bride?”

While Theresa glowed with all the revived force of indignation, at what appeared in her state of misery and destitution but a cold-blooded mockery, Claas Claassen seeing his son, and stung by the insulting epithets applied by the governor to his beloved tan-yard, spurred his heavy gelding, and cried out impetuously,

“What is all this? Eh, Renault, are you as weak a fool as ever? Why do you stand so

sneakingly? Where have you been? How came you back here—and with this young woman too? I knew well you might have her whom you liked, in spite of all the upstart pretenders of Brabant. Come, my young damsel, although the daughter of a condemned traitor, you need fear nothing while under the protection of the Burgomaster of Bruges, who will suffer no harm to his son's mistress."

Theresa shrunk from the protection so brutally offered, while Lyderic, looking infinite contempt at the old burgher, calmly struck a perfumed and embroidered glove in the face of the shuffling animal on which he was mounted, and exclaimed,

"Halloa! Has the beast no better manners than to press against the representative of the Lord's anointed? Must the governor be trampled on by such clumsy hoofs?"

Old Claas, who rode no better than tanners or tailors usually do, made violent efforts to hold firm in his seat, as the horse plunged back into the crowd and then forward again to escape the

various blows struck on his flanks in self-defence by those whom he incommoded. Sundry of the tipstaffs, halberdiers and other civic attendants rushed round to the rescue of the chief magistrate, who now vociferated loudly, and desperately struggled to fling himself *out* of his saddle, for he saw that the insolent governor was coolly carrying his point, by bearing off the disputed prize. Lyderic, as soon as he threw the burgomaster into such disorder, and never relinquishing his hold of Theresa's hand, ordered one of his aides-de-camp to bring forward the huge and gilded official carriage of state, which followed close behind in the order of the procession. This was performed in a moment, the coachman proudly whipping on the cumbrous steeds, who slashed their long tails about, and threw double confusion into the crowd. In a moment Lyderic and a couple of his officers placed Theresa in the carriage. He was on the point of stepping in after her, when old Claas, foaming with rage, bustled on foot through the crowd, striking at all sides with his truncheon of

state, and leaving behind various fragments of his robes of office, which the dense assemblage unwittingly tore from his back.

“ Hold ! stop ! desist ! ” cried he, with all his might, and seizing Lyderic by one arm. “ In the name of the city rights, I command you to deliver up that young woman ! She is a citizen’s daughter—herself a free denizen ! Privilege ! privilege ! Bruges and our rights ! Up, citizens, with staves, bills, and battle-axes ! Privilege ! privilege ! ”

Lyderic coolly answered this tirade by a contemptuous sneer, and a push, which flung the obstreperous burgomaster sprawling under his own triumphal arch.

“ Guards, do your duty ! I shall settle with this traitor anon ! Drive on ! ” said the governor, drawing close round the gilded yellow leather curtains of his vehicle ; and the four indigenous horses, obeying the lash, flung their unpatriotic hoofs most remorselessly through the astounded throng that filled the narrow street.

“Privilege, privilege!” cried the struggling burgomaster.

“Bruges and our rights!” snuffed the old beadle of St. Donat’s.

“Staves, bills, and battle-axes!” stuttered a couple of the journeymen hide-wetters, who lifted their master on his legs. But no sympathy was excited in the crowd for the degraded dignitary, who was looked on but as a heretic, a renegade, and a rebel, even by the party he had joined. Besides, public feeling was dead—the true patriots were broken, imprisoned, and powerless—the rabble were all the creatures of priestcraft and tyranny—and Bruges was lost! The frowning and ferocious looks of the governor’s Spanish guards completed the indignities he had so scornfully begun. They drove away the citizens, and even forced the chief magistrate to seek the shelter of his tan-yard, to which he was conducted, or rather dragged, by Renault and two of his other sons, who were angry but impotent witnesses of the scene.

A few minutes sufficed to bring the governor's coach of state close up to the main entrance of his palace, in the square called the Bourg. Theresa had little time to recal her scattered thoughts. But while she was lifted out by Lyderic, and carried over the threshold of the house of state, her eye caught a view of the gilded statues of saints and martyrs which filled the numerous niches of its florid front, and she fervently sent up to Heaven an inward prayer for protection.

Lyderic, placing his burthen on her feet again, made his way through the files of guards and lacqueys which thronged the entrance hall, staircase, and lobbies; and never quitting the firm clasp with which he hurried her along, he at last reached the door of that same chamber where we first introduced Don Juan de Trovaldo to the notice of our readers. He opened the door unceremoniously although the room was occupied. For at the balconied window, which our readers may remember, stood the figure of a man, whose agitated gestures spoke the grief with which he

gazed on the pillage and destruction still going forward in Rozenhoed-house and gardens, which that window so completely overlooked. The noise of Lyderic's entrance made him turn round—when, with simultaneous exclamations of astonishment and joy, he rushed towards Theresa and she towards him, and in a moment both father and daughter were clasped in a reciprocal embrace.

Lyderic then left his astonished prisoners to the free indulgence of their mutual revelations. Following his example, we shall for awhile quit them too; but content ourselves for the present with tracing his proceedings only to the private closet whence he issued his official orders. The most immediate of those now given, was one for the instant arrest of the burgomaster and his sons. In this moment of concussion between the civil and military powers, he knew the advantage of promptness—he also knew his man, and the grounds on which he himself acted. The order despatched by a competent force to put down

all popular resistance, he immediately penned a short account of the measures to his confidential patron Don Zeronimo Zaputa. But before the ink of this secret epistle was dry, the officer returned, with the intelligence that old Claassen and his four sons had every one already fled, and were seen on fleet horses, with a couple of attendants, all carrying saddle-bags which rattled with the chink of specie, and escaping from the city on the road to Antwerp.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE time had now arrived for the great effort so long in contemplation by the States General of Holland, which was to give to the war a totally new character, reverse the positions of the contending parties, and put the tyrannous assailants of Freedom upon the defence of their most vital possessions.

While every thing that had so lately occurred seemed to promise a campaign in the eastern extremities of the contending provinces, the preparations of Holland and the energy of Prince

Maurice were directed to the object of a rapid and vigorous invasion poured into the very heart of Flanders. All that had passed in Brabant, the reduction of the fortresses, the gaining over the mutineers, and the military demonstrations on the Meuse, were but stratagems to blind the archdukes to the real project in view ; and the first success was commensurate with the sagacity that planned and the talent that performed the whole.

In the very latter days of June the fleet and troops intended for the grand expedition were secretly assembled in the Island of Walcheren ; and ere the month had expired, the invading army landed at Philippine, a small fort two leagues from Ghent, and were instantly put in motion.

Prince Maurice found himself at the head of full eighteen thousand infantry and two thousand horse, a powerful force for the object in view, and a large one for the style of warfare carried on in this memorable contest. Smaller bodies of men were more generally brought into the field, and detached on services that presented but miniature

likenesses of the grander features of war : sieges of towns, surprises of forts, skirmishes of cavalry, were the usual forms of operations ; but the crash of large masses of men in pitched battle, so often heard in the Low Countries in modern times, rarely resounded through them in those days of yore. The evolutions of war had a narrow theatre for display ; and talents and armies were alike frittered away in detail.

Conflicts between the most renowned generals were mere trials of *skill*, mechanical efforts, which small minds might accomplish and even excel in. But the grand concussions of *genius*, which none but mighty intellects can direct, were seldom or never known. Even Maurice and Albert and the other cotemporary captains had few opportunities of passing those cramped and narrow limits. The former had successfully conducted upwards of twenty sieges, but had never fought more than one action to which even courtesy could give the title of a battle : the affair of Turnhout in 1557, gained by eight hundred ca-

valry. The operations which we have now rapidly to sketch formed one of the exceptions, and give a bolder and more stimulating picture of warfare than almost any event of the time; while the vigour and the acuteness almost equally displayed by the rival commanders, make us hesitate whether to bind the palm of merit round the brow of the victor or the vanquished. But in the celebrated fight which closed these operations, and even in battles of much greater magnitude, we cannot fail to be struck with the insignificance of the instruments which work out the destinies of the world. And we scarcely know which most to marvel at—the vastness of the results so often produced on millions of men and for a long lapse of years, by the sacrifice of a few thousands and the events of one day; or the littleness of mankind, that can be so affected by a pigmy band, scarce enough to make a handful in the grasp of Time.

The first movement of Prince Maurice was directed towards Bruges. He came within sight

of the place in the full expectation of its opening its gates and receiving him as a deliverer. But the events already described put a fatal negative upon his hopes, while they confirmed the sagacity with which he had almost predicted the consequences of faction upon the citizens of that and the other towns of Flanders. As the army defiled almost under the walls, and nearly within the range of the guns, several shots were fired from them; and accompanying shouts, from the Spanish garrison and their slavish partizans, told the invaders that they had now fairly entered the confines of an enemy's country.

Prince Maurice was deeply disappointed, but not for one moment embarrassed by this. He entered into instant consultation with the deputies of the States, who still accompanied him, less as commissioners to contravene his plans than as representatives of the republic to sanction and identify his proceedings. An immediate advance on the town of Nieuport, the original object of the expedition, was resolved on; and three or

four small forts in the neighbourhood of Bruges were taken without resistance, and amply garrisoned, to prove a check to any movements which the enemy might make in his rear. The progress of the army was quite without obstruction. No enemy appeared in arms; and the whole face of the country was deserted even by the peasants, who fled in every direction to the woods, guided by their priests who filled them with fears of the heretic invaders.

In a few days the fleet, with provisions and the requisite munitions of war, appeared off the coast, and safely entered the harbour of Ostend, furnishing the army with abundance of supplies. On the last day of June the Count of Solms, commanding Prince Maurice's advanced guard, invested Nieuport, having previously taken some forts close to the harbour of the town; and the prince himself broke up his camp at Oudenbourg the following morning, and proceeded with his whole army to commence the operations of the siege.

In the whole progress of the expedition the

prince was closely attended by, and paid a marked attention to one young officer, a stranger to every other individual of the army, but one not unknown to our readers. It was Count Ivon de Bassenveldt, who, by a series of manœuvres that obtained him the highest praise, had safely conducted the remnant of his regiment, with the few women, and his hostage the Provost of Flanders, through the various dangers of their retreat, and had joined the prince on the day after that on which De Grimberghe had quitted him with Theresa under his escort. We cannot stop to recount the various emotions caused by De Bassenveldt's unlooked-for appearance ; nor those which he endured, of delight, and then of disappointment bordering on despair, on learning first that Theresa was safe, and next, that she was snatched by fate once more from almost his very grasp.

Arnoul de Grimberghe, a few hours after he had parted from his charge on the confines of the territory of Bruges, met a single warrior riding furiously along, on a horse of rare beauty. A line

from Prince Maurice certified that it was De Bassenveldt, and authorized De Grimberghe to reconduct Theresa to his rendezvous in the island of Walcheren, if such was her pleasure on speaking with the bearer of his billet. De Bassenveldt, on finding that she was indeed ere then in Bruges, resolved, at all hazards, to pursue her into the very city. De Grimberghe had nought to say to this wild object. He saw he was not a man to be dictated to, and that his state of feeling would not admit of even reasoning. He therefore saw him depart as though he were a man totally lost—and such he most probably would have been, had fate destined him to fulfil his purpose. He turned by a cross-road well known to him to enter the city by the Antwerp gate. But ere he reached it, he encountered the refugee family of Claassen, flying as for life and death. A scene not necessary now to detail—short, pithy, and decisive—took place between them; and before their half-blown horses had time to recover breath, they were all again in full speed, with their backs to

Bruges. While the burgomaster and his sons continued their route to Antwerp, De Bassenveldt pursued that by which De Grimberghe and his party journeyed, and in due time he overtook them, and rejoined the patriot army, ready for any deed that desperation might point to. The prince cheered him for several days with the prospect of his entering Bruges in triumph, and snatching Theresa from the power of Lyderic, of whose new appointment and late doings he had heard from Renault Claassen. The failure of these hopes but added to his mental torture; and taking comfort only in his despair, he now but wished to do his duty to his country, heedless of his peculiar fate. The regiment of black chasseurs, now mustering barely four hundred effective men, took a distinguished place among the cavalry of the army, and were looked on with peculiar consideration, as well from their celebrity as from being the only mounted regiment of Walloons in either service.

And now came the time when the Archduke Albert, and his not less heroic spouse, shewed a

boldness and vigour that proved them worthy of the empire at stake, and of being opposed, hand and head, to the most consummate general and the wisest people of Europe. Intelligence of the invasion, and the passage of the Dutch army, sped like wildfire from Bruges to Brussels, and the archdukes burst from their apparent listlessness to meet the perilous event.

Bruges was fixed on for the head-quarters of the sovereigns, and incredible efforts made to collect an army there. Mendoza, admiral of Arragon, Count Frederic de Berg, Velasco, general of artillery, La Berlotte, Zapena, and other officers of note, rushed to the rendezvous. The garrison of Ghent, Bruges, and the other towns of Flanders, were in a few days assembled, and the mutinous Spaniards of Diest, an important force, forgetting their grievances in this vital crisis, hurried to range themselves again in the royal ranks. Scarcely a week before, it did not seem possible for the archdukes to muster four thousand men. On the 30th of June they passed in review, in a

plain between Ghent and Bruges, fourteen thousand as gallant veterans as ever took the field. This army was, as usual, composed of Spaniards, Italians, Walloons, and some Irish; all catholics, mostly bigots, and individually, or in the mass, ready to shed their heart's blood for the cause of royalty and religion.

As the ranks stood in firm array, Albert and Isabella, mounted on their war-steeds, and followed by a numerous train, rode along the front. When they reached the centre of the line, where the now repentant but lately mutinous Spaniards had their post, they suddenly stopped; and Isabella, noble in mien, and of intrepid spirit (who only wanted as large a field to have been as great a sovereign as her contemporary, Elizabeth of England), spoke to her soldiers in the following words:

“Comrades! you could not be called on to fight for a juster cause than mine. Veterans, who have so often bled in these wars, you know the enemy you have to oppose. What has not

the king my father done to bring back these rebels to their duty? What would not my royal brother sacrifice to abate their fury? Nothing can satisfy their guilty passions. It is not the yoke of their legitimate masters they would shake off—but they would spurn our holy faith, and defy the true God! Heresy is their idol, and the ruin of religion their aim. But, relying on your bravery, I reckon on a certain triumph in the contest, and your reward is already registered in Heaven. Be certain also of all that earthly gratitude can ensure you. My husband, my brother, and myself, will wear your services in our hearts' memory. Every hour I expect large sums of gold from Spain. My faithful states of Flanders and Brabant will forthwith pour out considerable subsidies. And I swear to you, on my royal faith, and by the kingly blood that fills my veins, that every jewel I possess—ay, to these glittering baubles that hang from my ears, shall be sacrificed and sold to meet your wants!”

Shouts, such as enthusiastic thousands are wont

to send out, interrupted this harangue. A few words from Albert told the excited veterans that he now joined his fate with theirs, to hazard both empire and life, and fight to the last gasp at their head. And finding it impossible, even were it politic, to arrest their half frantic impetuosity, he at once drew his sword, gave the order to march, and in an instant more he was in advance on the direct route to Nieuport, followed by this imposing, and, as he felt sure, invincible force.

By the next evening, all the forts in the neighbourhood, so easily taken and new garrisoned by Maurice a few days before, fell before the irresistible attack of the royal army, and those who vainly resisted their assault were every man put to the sword.

In the course of that night, the 1st of July, Prince Maurice had intelligence of these almost incredible movements. The news came like a thunderbolt on the patriot army. But before day-break, a detachment, consisting of two thousand infantry, almost all Scotch, and some squadrons

of cavalry, with whom were De Bassenveldt and his scanty regiment, all under the command of Count Ernest of Nassau, were pushed forward to secure two bridges, which crossed a river of inconsiderable breadth near fort Albertus, and where a stand might have been made, to enable the main army to prepare for the attack which so unexpectedly threatened it. But when this brave advance reached the post, they found it already occupied by the indefatigable archduke, and they were in a moment involved in a contest with the entire royalist force. Notwithstanding the most determined bravery, the infantry were borne down by numbers, and almost annihilated. Eight hundred of the brave Scotch were killed on the spot, including eleven captains, and a still greater number of inferior officers. Several hundred were wounded and made prisoners; and at length Count Ernest, with De Bassenveldt and a few other officers, regained the besieging army with the remains of the cavalry, and pursued by the whole of the victorious enemy.

As the royalists advanced to consummate the work they had begun, Albert dispatched to Isabella, at Bruges, an account of the defeat of "the rebels' " advanced guard, and an assurance that in a few hours they would be entirely destroyed ; and ere noon, the bells of Bruges, and the surrounding villages, rang out loud peals of triumph for the news.

When the intelligence reached Maurice, he was busily employed in forming his troops in order of battle, to encounter the shock which he had such reason now to expect. He was not one moment daunted by what he heard ; but continued his manœuvres with renewed activity and unmoved coolness. The advanced guard of his army, consisting of the English and the Ferisons, under the command of Sir Francis Vere, soon occupied their position on the left, close touching on the sea. The main body, made up of the French, Walloons, and Swiss, soon formed in battalions, headed by Count Everard de Solms, in the very heart of the sand-hills which composed the soil of this

memorable battle-field. The cavalry, under Count Louis of Nassau, was on the right, or in parts distributed through various divisions. Van den Tempel had charge of the rear-guard. Prince Maurice took no particular station; but, with his brilliant suite, many of them formerly named, was, during the course of the eventful day, in every possible point of the fight.

While these dispositions went on, the arch-duke advanced, with all the cautious activity of a good general. Restraining the impatience of his flushed battalions, he brought them about two o'clock to a halt within view of Nieuport, their friendly town, and Ostend, the only port in Flanders then in possession of the patriots. The nature of the ground concealed the position of Prince Maurice and his army, and allowed no opportunity for reconnoitring. At this period the arch-duke summoned all his general officers to an immediate council, under the coarse canopy thrown up upon a few stakes hastily thrust into the sandy soil. A large drum-head for a table, and some

small barrels of powder for seats, formed the furniture of the rude tent in which this important, and indeed immortal, debate was held.

“Generals, veterans, comrades!” said Albert, when they were assembled, while the troops, in their whole line of halt, stretched their limbs on the sand, and hastily swallowed their last rations—to many of them their last meal—“Friends, let me have your counsel! Shall we now march forward to the charge?”

Every one curbed his impatience of reply, while Gaspard Zapena, an old Spaniard, his grey hairs and wrinkled brow vouching for two-thirds of a century’s experience, rose and deliberately spoke.

“My prince!” said he, looking with firm respect on the archduke, “we have yet an hour to march before we can engage the rebel lines. Our gallant troops are still but men, and the work this morning done has already fatigued them. We know not yet the enemy’s position. The superiority of numbers is surely on his side. But let your highness take the advantage which

Heaven has thrown into your hands, and the victory must be yours. Your vigorous movements have utterly surprised this so much vaunted foe. A victorious force in front, a hostile town behind him, he must retreat. Let him do so ! He has but two routes to choose—the sea or the land. By land he can only seek shelter in Ostend, which must speedily fall before our arms. If he flies by sea, we attack him in his confusion, and he must infallibly be destroyed !”

Several stood up as the venerable warrior resumed his place, but none could get the first word from the impetuous La Barlotte, all order of seniority being overlooked in the urgent excitement of the scene. A second Sempronius in point of council, but stanch and honest in his allegiance and opinions, this fiery Walloon, a true soldier of fortune, exclaimed in a loud voice, with glowing cheeks and burning looks—

“ Prince, Generals ! for the sake of our cause, for religion’s sake, in the name of the saints, let not this unworthy though sincere advice pre-

vail ! Shame on our names for ever if we let slip the glory that courts our grasp ! Terrified and trembling—his forts torn from him, his advanced guard annihilated, frozen with dread, the dastard enemy will at our approach fly in disorder to his ships, and fall an unresisting prey ! Our troops cry out for the order to advance—will you let this ardour cool ? March, march, without a moment's further pause ! With our sovereign at our head, what can resist our attack ? Oh, do not by hesitation put off the hour of triumph, turn into ice our soldiers' boiling blood, and give the accursed foe the glory that Heaven has already decreed to us !”

A shout of approval was the answer to this appeal. The soldiers without, who waited the result of the council in trembling anxiety, echoed the cry and sprang again to their arms ; and from one end of the line to the other nothing was heard but exclamations to be led on, and oaths that not a man of the rebel force should have quarter, but Maurice and his brother—and these only to be

dragged in triumph at the tail of the archduke's horse !

Yet in spite of all these demonstrations, Albert still balanced in his choice of measures. His natural temperament, schooled in the wily tact of Philip, his uncle, father-in-law, and patron, leant towards caution ; but his courageous sagacity told him there was a tide in the affairs of men, collectively as well as singly—and still the commands to stand fast or to advance struggled for utterance on his lips, and were watched with fierce anxiety by those around him. Chance decided, as it so often does, the destiny of the day and the fate of thousands.

Albert held in his hand one of those marvelously-considered instruments, then newly invented, but imperfectly formed, by Zachary Jansen of Middlebourg, called a telescope. While the archduke's mind rapidly took a view of his situation, his eye was applied to the instrument, with which there were few others in his army sufficiently acquainted to know the right from the wrong end.

Suddenly he started with unwonted vivacity, dashed the glass from his hand, drew his sword, and cried out,

“Blessed be the holy saints—they fly! their fleet is in full sail for Ostend! Sound trumpets! Forward! In the name of the Virgin and the Trinity! Forward to Victory!”

Another moment saw him on his horse again, heading the ardent columns, which moved on, in two divisions of infantry, preceded and flanked by the horse, while the whole disposable force of artillery was dispersed in the intervals in four brigades.

As soon as Prince Maurice had safely passed his army from under the walls of Nieuport, across the river which they were luckily enabled to ford, the tide being low, and seen them fairly occupying their positions, he called all his staff around him, among whom were the several young noblemen before enumerated, scarcely any of them of superior age to his own dearly-loved brother, Frederick-Henry.

“ My brother !” said Maurice, with a feeling and consideration which render that passing moment one of the most interesting in all the records of war—“ My brother, and my young friends all, we touch on a terrible hour. The battle about to be fought will be one of life and death. No quarter can be expected from our ferocious enemy. For my part, I must conquer or leave my body on these sands. Honour forbids the possibility of flight to me and my troops, and if we die, we die covered with fame. But you, in the spring of life and youth, are not forced by any duty to brave the brunt of such a scene. The tide comes up fast—the ships are afloat—I have given orders for every one to weigh anchor, and set sail far from the shore, so that no chance of escape can be left for a single man. The deputies are about to embark ; you are now all free to join them, and take shelter in Ostend, to wait for happier days—to welcome us in victory—or to avenge our fate. Go, my brother—but give

me one embrace—then lead your gallant friends—and my love and blessing be on your head !”

The hero turned aside his face—for in the weakness of true manhood he was ashamed of its noblest emotions.

“ Death, death, a thousand times before shame !” cried Frederick-Henry, waving his helmet above his head, and seizing his brother’s hand, which returned his grasp with more than a brother’s force.

“ Death or Victory !” exclaimed in a chorus of valour the young lords ; and many a sober head was for a moment intoxicated by the inspiring sound.

“ Be it so ! be it so ! every man to his post !” said Maurice ; and away he flew with his enthusiastic attendants, and soon seemed to be at once in every part of the field.

“ They come !” said he at length, pausing near the centre of the positions, and turning to the troops—“ and now, my gallant fellow soldiers, a word or two to your bold hearts. I confess to

you I have been surprised ! I thought that the forts would have resisted any force the enemy could bring against me until Nieuport had fallen into my hands. Fate has deceived me—but our rash assailants are resolved that we shall conquer fate itself. A day's delay on their part had been our inevitable ruin. But see, they come madly on, to save us from disgrace and give us victory ! Blinded with hatred and bloated with pride, they are rushing to their own destruction. Meet them, then, like men—shew that you are not daunted by this morning's check. Remember how often we have fought and bled together ! You shall see me every where that danger or duty points to. Let us all to-day prove ourselves worthy of each other, and of the glorious cause we serve. Look yonder at those vessels—they are already far beyond our reach ! Now on the enemy—he is just within our grasp ! One final word—we must conquer or die !”

Ere a shout could answer him, Maurice was once more out of sight, bounding across the sand-

hills, placing the artillery, haranguing some regiments, fixing others in position—in all things surpassing his almost unlimited reputation. He left nothing undone to secure success. He had planks brought from the ships, to form platforms under his cannon, and steady their fire. He chose his position with the wind and sun in rear; and then with a serene front he awaited the attack.

The armies were as nearly as possible equal; the garrisons of the forts, the losses of the morning, and the troops necessary to keep those of Nieuport in check, reducing Prince Maurice's force to a close level with Albert's. Thus then began this regular pitched battle.

“Soldiers!” said Albert, just a moment before the shock commenced, “remember that you fight for God, the king, the archduchess, and for me.”

In the next instant the Spanish cavalry under Mendoza charged on the right, along the strand between the downs and the approaching tide. The advance under Vere met the charge; and a

battery raised just above them on the sand-hills poured in upon the assailants and soon threw them into disorder. But then the royalist advanced guard, headed by the mutineers of Diest, rushed forward through the downs, and pressing on the English and French infantry, turned the fortune of the fight. Column after column came on. The gallant Vere was already badly wounded, and his troops driven back in partial disorder. But his brother Horace took his place, rallied the broken ranks, and recovered his ground. Prince Maurice seeing all that passed, now sent forward Count Everard de Solms with the Walloon and Swiss foot, at the same moment that he ordered Louis of Nassau to charge with the chief force of cavalry. They were met by two battalions of Spaniards and Italians, under Zapena, and Don Alphonso Avalos. It was then the fight became general, pikes and swords clashing against helm and cuirass, and the fortune of the day hanging for awhile in total doubt.

Albert now seeing the decisive moment arrive,

advanced at the head of his reserve with La Berlotte, De Bucquoi, the main body of the infantry, and all his artillery. As he marched on, he might have been supposed some crusading chief leading his fanatic bands against the followers of Mahomed; for the rich standards of embroidered silk which floated round him bore only such devices as, a figure of the Virgin in a sun of gold, with various moons and stars, and the motto *Benedicta tu in Mulieribus*; or Christ on the Cross, in all the lively colours of painting, and a scroll with these words *Adoramus te Christe et benedicimus tibi*; and many others, all at variance with existing notions of taste in matters of modern warfare.

The conflict which followed this movement was terrific. Maurice, too, perceived that every thing depended on its issue, and promptly moved forward Van den Tempel with the entire rear-guard, excepting a few squadrons of cavalry, including De Bassenveldt's Walloons, which he kept with him in all his own movements, as a

last resource for the final moment, to leave one chance of turning the doubtful scale of war.

While the battle raged with its hottest fury, De Bassenveldt, De Grimberge, and the others nearest the prince, who galloped from the centre towards the right, observed a man in the dress of a soldier, but unarmed, fall suddenly down at the shady side of a sand-hill, as a cannon bullet from the enemy's lines almost smothered him with dust, and as they thought killed him.

“*Pulvis et umbra !*”—exclaimed Cornelis Van der Gobble, for it was he—and young De Grimberghe, who had learned Latin at the Royal College of Brussels, and knew his man, patched up the quotation with,

“*—— fruges consumere nati !*” as he galloped hastily on ; while Van der Gobble, rolling about as if in violent contortions of agony literally buried himself in the sand, his last words heard by the observers being,

“*Dulce ot decorum est pro patriâ mori.*”

Several flying jokes were cracked on the subject

of “the lank commissioner’s” scratching his own grave, and the patriot aptness of his dying quotation. And some told the rest, who marvelled at his being in such a place, that he had avowedly debated on the chance of being killed in the battle, or dying of famine in Ostend, and deciding that the former was the less horrible fate, he borrowed an old cuirass and helmet, and, equipped in them, had quietly sat down on the sand-hill, keeping as nearly as possible out of range of shot from the Spanish army at one side, and the garrison of Nieuport at the other, who had attacked the rear of the position, and kept the patriots between a double fire.

The armies had now been engaged for three hours of incessant fighting. The fluctuations of chance as to final success were many; but the masterly arrangements of Maurice had given his troops advantages to balance the enemy’s confidence of victory (which so often fulfils its own prophecy), under the inspiration of which they fought. The setting sun glared fiercely in their

faces, and dazzled their sight, while a brisk wind carried the smoke and sand into their eyes ; and the superior steadiness of the patriot artillery on their wooden platform enabled almost every gun to take unerring aim. Still the royalists were gaining ground, borne up against all obstacles by the presence of Albert, who was seen in the midst of the *mêlée*, his casque thrown away, that he might be the better distinguished. Maurice, too, was continually in the hottest of the fight, personal safety being nothing, compared to the stake for which both commanders played their desperate game.

At this instant the prince saw with keen anguish that his glorious kinsman, Louis of Nassau, with about a dozen followers, was surrounded by a considerable body of the enemy's lancers, and fighting hand to hand against many assailants.

“On, on to the rescue, brave Walloons ! Forward, De Bassenveldt ! Nassau, to the rescue !” exclaimed Maurice, dashing sword in hand at the head of the small troop, still followed closely by

his staff, and soon coming once more to blows. De Bassenveldt, keeping his eye steadily fixed on Count Louis' orange plume, and mounted on Rolando, full of spirit and activity, soon outstripped the rest. He darted among the enemy, who fled as the reinforcement came on, and ere they had fought their way up, he was safely covering the almost exhausted count's retreat.

And then his eye suddenly turned on the most glorious prize of the battle. Albert was himself almost within his lance's reach ! In a moment De Bassenveldt was before him, and the gallant archduke, with his raised rapier prepared for the coming assault. De Bassenveldt held his well-proved lance once more in rest ; and aiming full at the archduke's unvizored face, he struck his spurs into Rolando's side, and in the bound his lance wounded Albert in the right cheek and ear. De Bassenveldt wheeled round, grappled him, and dragged him to the ground ; but the rush of the surrounding enemy forced him to quit his hold. The archduke remained on foot ; and his horse fled

wildly through the field, scattering consternation, in the belief that his noble rider was slain.

This event was decisive of the battle. The archduke's disappearance shook the courage of his bravest soldiers; and Prince Maurice, seizing the decisive moment, ordered an advance of his whole line. The victory was in that moment complete. The broken royalists fled in every direction, abandoning standards, artillery, and baggage, and leaving the field covered with dead. Historians, as usual, differ as to the number of slain, varying in their estimate from three thousand to seven thousand. The veteran Zapena, as brave in battle as he was wise in council, was killed, with the colonels Avalos and Bastock, the first an Italian, the last an Irishman, and many of lesser rank. La Barlotte and Bucequoi were wounded. Mendoza, d'Avilla, and several of rank, were made prisoners. The very doctor, and page of the archduke, with all his personal paraphernalia, fell into the hands of the victors. In short, almost

every officer in the defeated army was killed or wounded, and upwards of three hundred taken prisoners. Had Maurice, like Joshua, been able to make the sun stand still for one little hour, not a single man had escaped. But the great prize so nearly in his reach succeeded in saving himself. Albert gained another horse, and fled in all haste towards Bruges, accompanied by the Duke d'Aumale, and a few other men of rank. De Bassenveldt never lost sight of him till the darkness was complete; and even then he followed the sounds of his horse's hoofs to the very gates of Bruges, accompanied by two cavaliers, who had attended him closely throughout the arduous day, and about fifty of his faithful chasseurs, all who were in a condition to keep pace with the fierce pursuit.

Prince Maurice halted his army on the ground so bloodily fought for and won. His own quarters were taken up in a tent close to the little church of Westende; and there he at length sat

down to such a supper as might be hastily procured, with those of his gallant friends who survived the fight, and Mendoza, and other prisoners of rank with whom he shared his soldier's fare.

CHAPTER IX.

WE must now return to the governor's palace at Bruges ; and (while De Bassenveldt and his band follow the flying archduke in hot pursuit) condense in a brief recital the results of a week's anxious discussion between Theresa and her father. When Lyderic left them together, locked in each other's arms, and scarcely believing the reality of their mutual safety, they forgot that all the perils they had escaped were nothing in comparison to that which now beset them. Misfortune may at times be shut out from the mind ; guilt never ; for the first is

extraneous, the latter a part of one's self. It was thus that Van Rozenhoed and his daughter in the joy of the moment lost sight of their actual situation, nor did the conduct of Lyderic tend to break the charm. He left them long and frequently to themselves, treated them with the greatest distinction, and never intruded rudely on them ; but with all the suavity of servile cunning striving to work his way into their favour, he never wore the genuine air of happiness that springs from prosperity unalloyed by remorse. Van Rozenhoed's antipathy was not to yield to the specious hypocrisy of him who held him in the indignity of imprisonment, and whose base object was evident. He had interfered with his authority to stop the pillage of Rozenhoed House only to preserve its valuable contents for himself. He threw the whole blame of the outrage on Claas Claassen and his sons. He would have persuaded both father and daughter, that the process of confiscation notoriously going on against their property was a mere matter of form to secure it to them the

better, and that his influence made his marriage with Theresa the sure means of security for her fortune and her father's life. And in his frequent interviews, so humbly solicited and which they could not decline, he never failed to present all these points of argument with the whole subtlety of his character.

Both father and daughter confessed that there was much truth in his insidious statements. But they would have preferred the threatened ruin to the projected union. Van Rozenhoed saw that his property in Bruges was utterly lost ; but he would rather it devolved to the government he detested, than to the individual he despised. For his life he had no fears. He knew that the day of wanton violence was gone by ; and that the exile he had to expect from an ungrateful town was not so terrible a fate as his enemies supposed. Besides, he had a strong presentiment of relief. His confidence in the talents and the friendship of Prince Maurice was extreme ; and with his usual tenacity in matters of hope he clung to the notion

that a happy marriage with De Bassenveldt, under the Stadtholder's auspices, was yet to be Theresa's fate. He therefore did not violently regret the overtures of Lyderic, or oppose his daughter's reiterated resolution to bury herself in the convent sanctuary, or die in rejection of all suitors for her hand. Lyderic trusted to his own cringing perseverance and the father's apparent yielding, to effect the great purpose of his pride rather than his love ; while Theresa rested, in a state of comparative tranquillity, in the protection of her father. With a firmness, which proved the depth of her sorrow, she told him of her secret affections and of her lover's loss. It is only shallow regrets that cannot support the mention of their cause. With a fixed eye, pale cheek, and sinking heart, she calmly recounted her short sad tale. Her father listened and his bosom felt the influence of her recital. He was grieved for her sufferings, but he could not resist a counterpoise of relief that seemed to balance his regret. He remembered Lambert Boonen's doubtful conduct in Brussels,

never thoroughly explained. He now saw the duplicity of which he had been the dupe. And he could not be insensible to the advantage gained to all his prospects, let his fate turn as it might, in being freed from the powerful influence of an ignoble aspirant for his daughter's hand. Lambert Boonen's isolated act of bravery, recounted with broken voice and thrilling emotion by Theresa, appeared to Van Rozenhoed no justification for his presumptuous claim. In fact he was from the hour of the prince's recommendation, resolved that she should wed De Bassenveldt, and no other suitor had found a chance of favour in his sight, though he had united in himself all the best qualities in which every other individual might excel.

Another source of deep, yet suppressed indignation in Van Rozenhoed's breast, and which he felt powerful enough to decide him, although Lambert Boonen were to rise from his untimely grave, was the memory of the Prior of Saint Andrew's deceitful conduct. To have been made the tool of a priest's cunning and a boy's designs,

galled him to the quick, and he could not help dwelling with complacency, at least, on the various reports of Father Welfort's death, or of a sentence of perpetual imprisonment pronounced against him by the archdukes in council. Such reports he had heard during his sojourn at Brussels; and he did not or would not believe the counter assertion of Lyderic and others of the court minions (anxious to remove any stigma of tyranny from their masters) that the priest had escaped from his cloister by some secret way.

“No,” muttered Van Rozenhoed, whenever the thought of this double duplicity crossed him, “never could I have consented to my daughter's mistaken passion—never have suffered myself to be outwitted by the insidious plot! I always had my misgivings, from the hour that the youth was so artfully imposed on me by his wily uncle as my secretary. 'Tis well he is now no more, and that I am saved the trouble of breaking poor Theresa's heart. Let her love his memory, as much as she likes and as long as she can! It cannot last!

Let her look to a convent till the prospect of its desolate monotony fatigues her mental gaze ! Her youth, her sex are not fitted for eternal grief or unsocial seclusion. Better days are in store ! Enough is left to make all happy yet ! The noble prince will conquer ; I feel the certainty in my heart. This young hero De Bassenveldt, whom they glorify so highly by proscription and bann, will come to our relief—and liberty for me, and love for Theresa must be our lot at last !”

Thinking thus, Van Rozenhoed bore his captivity well ; nor did he despair even when he saw from his windows the archduke and his veteran troops march out in anticipated triumph on their road to Nieuport ; yet it may be that his heart did sink, when De Roulemonde, pressing his suit with more than usual ardour, communicated to him and Theresa the first hurried bulletin of the defeat of the patriot vanguard, and when the well known sounds of the city bells gave out their premature peals of triumph. After issuing various orders for rejoicings and preparations for the

reception of the victors, Lyderic again presented himself to Van Rozenhoed and Theresa, and said, with haughty tenderness, “ Now, even now, I once more implore your consent to your own happiness. Our cause prevails ; my power increases with each new victory ; the rebels will ere sunset be to a man destroyed, and to-morrow my word will be a sentence of law. The gratitude of the archdukes will be unbounded for what I have done, for the destruction of Welbasch—for the preservation of this city against such a force as came before it. In the hour of glorious triumph, they will be more than ever lavish, and whatever I ask will be mine—increase of rank, new honours, certain wealth ! Think, too, that a word from my lips, a finger raised, may be enough to decide the fate of ye both. But I use no threat—I only supplicate when I might command. Once more reflect !—Full pardon for you, Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, it shall be my first demand—ample confirmation of property, reap-

pointment to your dignity—are these no points worth gaining? and you, Theresa!—”

But ere he could recapitulate the advantages he would have held out to her, a new messenger arriving with breathless haste, and almost forcing his way on the governor's privacy, brought the account of the battle's commencement, and of the first check received by Mendoza's attack. Lyderic treated it with scorn. But another and another confirmed the news; and almost minute after minute brought still worse intelligence, by the many who were glad to fly the desperate contest to spread terror into the heart of Bruges.

At length came a frightened runaway, with the report that Albert was wounded—another to say he was taken prisoner—a third to swear he was slain. Isabella received all with a stern fortitude worthy a heroine of history. And when at length her husband himself appeared, flying, bleeding, almost alone, to relieve her dread for his life, but confirm her fear for his defeat, she bore up

equally against the rush of joy and of grief, and took the road with him to Ghent, cherishing his fainting frame, and cheering his anguished mind.

And now it was that De Roulemond's character betrayed its innate baseness. Bewildered at the sudden reverse ; trembling for his vaunted honour, power, and influence ; seeing even ruin in a worse aspect than it really wore, he would gladly by an act of double apostacy have abandoned the losing cause—but he dared not, and he knew not how to do it if he dared. Every sinister report increased his alarm and lessened his courage, and brought out in full relief his sordid disposition. His first thought was flight—his next money. He hurried to the public chest that stood in the cabinet. He filled pocket after pocket, and pouch after pouch with the government gold. He loaded his person with the jewels which adorned the official robes of state. As night came on he issued his last orders, to have every house illuminated so as to favour the fugitive remnants of the army that might make their road through the city.

The few soldiers left behind under his command fled like the rest; and when the archduke arrived, passed through, and disappeared, with only delay sufficient to enable his gallant wife to take horse and accompany him, Lyderic, still irresolute whether to abandon Theresa and the hopes connected with her, or attempt to carry her off by force, was in a moment a prisoner in his own palace, and to those whom of all mankind he could have least supported the power or the presence.

As the furious galloping of horses was heard through the great square, and then in the Bourge, in front of the palace gate, shouts of terrific sound rang in the open hall, and up the vaulted corridors—

“De Bassenveldt ! De Bassenveldt !” said the appalling sounds—scarcely more terrible to the guilty stricken Lyderic than to her who was the mortal type of purity trembling at his side ; Van Rozenhoed alone bounded with joy.

“I knew it !” cried he, rushing towards the

door, "our deliverer comes! My child, my child, freedom and happiness are at hand!"

"Never, by Heavens!" exclaimed Lyderic, seizing Theresa round the waist, and drawing his short sword—"never shall she be free or happy, if I am not. This is the price of my ransom!"

Van Rozenhoed, unarmed as he was, would have rushed on him, but Lyderic put the point of his sword to Theresa's bosom. The father stood fixed with fear, while Lyderic reached the door, and fastened the many bolts to which tyranny had for ages depended as the security of this last retreat.

In a moment more, violent but vain assaults were made outside—for the iron-plated oak resisted well; while vociferations were poured forth, in voices that Lyderic recognised as those of his former brother officers. Don Diego Leone McIntire, now Major of the Black Walloons, and a few others who had survived all perils and followed De Bassenveldt to the last, shouted for admission to the recreant's den, like a pack of hun-

gry hounds roaring for their prey. Lyderic, summoning up the last dregs of his courage, stood pale and trembling in the midst of the room; Theresa more dead than alive in his grasp; and Van Rozenhoed, with clasped hands, looking on, afraid to utter even the prayer that struggled for expression.

But a few instants more ended this scene of torturing suspense. A rustling was heard in the now full-foliaged tree whose branches reached close to the balcony, more violent than that which had alarmed Don Juan de Trovaldo the first night of his appearance in this history. Well might Lyderic turn with instinctive terror towards the sound. It was De Bassenveldt himself, who, having flung away cuisses, cuirass, and casque, and trusting to his active limbs, stout heart and trusty sword, had rapidly climbed the tree, which he remembered well, since he had in the night alighted on its rugged trunk and caught the secrets of Trovaldo's conference with Gaspar the Moriscoe. One active bound brought him

now on the balcony, and another directly into the chamber. His gleaming sword, his flashing eyes, his hair floating wild on his brow and down to his shoulders, his defenceless person clad in a plain civilian suit of black—all affected the three observers with various emotions. Van Rozenhoed could not utter a word, or move a joint. Lyderic's arm fell nerveless by his side. His weapon's point touched the floor; and Theresa, too, would have sunk on it, had not De Bassenveldt sprung forward, as she reeled towards him with a hysterical scream, and then fell senseless against his breast. While De Bassenveldt clasped her to him, with a force that might have almost strained life into the dead, he called out to Lyderic,

“Come on, wretch, and meet your doom!”

“Ivon, I cannot fight with you!” was the craven's faint reply. And scarce was it uttered when the secret door beneath the tapestry, of the existence of which he was ignorant, burst open; and, as if the figures worked on it had started forth in a living metamorphosis, the Moriscoe rushed into

the room, while an apparent warrior by his side threw off a plumed helm and discovered the face of Beatrice. Lyderic, with straining eyes fixed on the apparition, was incapable of uttering even a cry for mercy. Both brother and sister with upraised weapons were rushing on him, Gaspar crying out, in allusion to a scene which De Bassenveldt alone understood,

“ Ah, traitor ! the blow which I struck into this canvas was, then, prophetic ! you die by my arm ! ”

But ere the rapier's point could reach the culprit, De Bassenveldt threw the double shield of his own and Theresa's body before the uplifted arm—

“ Hold ! ” cried he—“ If you love me or your own revenge, strike not ! Let him live in his infamy—death would be too merciful a fate ! ”

Gaspar and Beatrice instantly obeyed : and, as the former drew the bolts and let in the tide of warriors, the sentence that inflicted life on the miserable wretch was briefly told them.

“Now quick, my friends, to horse!” cried Count Ivon. “Conduct the father of my bride—Away, away! I follow ye!”

Van Rozenhoed attempted to stammer some words, but he was seized in the bony arms of Don Diego, and hurried down the staircase. The others lingered awhile, to look on and listen to Lyderic, as he cried with choking voice,

“De Bassenveldt, damned De Bassenveldt! kill me—I defy—I dare you to the deed—Coward, villain! kill me, Ivon, that I may at least, in dying, have one cause to hate you!”

“On, on, my friends!” exclaimed Ivon. “Leave the recreant alone with his remorse!” A shout of laughter from the group made bitter mockery of the caitiff, and in a minute more the palace was utterly deserted, except by its miserable governor. The cavalcade that had performed this daring exploit, swept like a storm-gust through the city. The terrified inhabitants, who had expected to see the whole victorious army rushing in, now discovered that it was a mere

handful of men, who had for a while held a hundred thousand in dread. And as some of the most hardy of the armed burghers now stole a glance from the ramparts that commanded the Ostend gate, and overlooked the road towards the battle-field, they saw the black-mailed troop galloping furiously beyond, led by an unarmoured youth, who held before him, on a horse of surpassing beauty and fleetness, a female form that lay like a corpse against his breast.

Flying thus along the causeway, unheeding of the dying or fugitive remains of the vanquished army, De Bassenveldt soon reached the little hamlet of Westende, where Maurice, as before stated, had fixed his quarters for the night. The church door was open, the holy edifice having been appropriated to the reception of the wounded of both armies, who were brought in and attended with indiscriminate care. Into this refuge, amidst groans of suffering, murmurs of despair, and thanksgivings for victory, De Bassenveldt carried Theresa, to whom sensation was once more restored,

by the rapid motion of the horse, the night-air, and the varied sounds that now broke on her. Her first look of incredulous ecstasy was thrown on De Bassenveldt's face. She gazed a moment—put his flowing curls aside—still held them in her fingers, as though every hair were the clew to a labyrinth of wonder—then pressed her hand to her forehead, as if to condense the scattered fancies of her brain, while his voice murmured such words as these :

“ Yes, yes, my best beloved, it is me—me alone—me, in all forms, all changes, all seasons, thine own ! Doubt not the blessed reality of our union, never more to part ! Do you not know this voice, these looks—this embrace ? ”

At the warm pressure of his lips upon her forehead, the tears gushed forth from eyes that could no longer doubt the miracle before them. It was indeed Lambert Boonen, indeed De Bassenveldt, that she gazed on and clung to—each—both—separate—united !

“ No !” said she, faintly, yet fervently, “ I will reason no more—but believe it all !”

Her father too, stood by her side ; Beatrice, in her woman's habit, which the unfeminine armour no longer concealed ; Nona, Count Ivon's faithful nurse, and Theresa, too, doubly faithful to the cause she had so prudently served ; and he, that strange mysterious monk, Father Wolfert, in his full robes of priesthood, at once acknowledged the father of her lover, the exiled Count Gabriel, the secret visiter of her midnight hours at Welbasch, the assumed representative of the wizard's ghost, a disguise imagined for the double purpose of his own concealment, and to inspire with supernatural courage the soldiers of his son.

Such was the group that encircled Theresa, and left her no more but her own existence to doubt or marvel at. And as her strength returned, and her confidence rose, and she listened to spoken volumes of explanation compressed into the utterance of minutes, Prince Maurice himself, the glo-

rious conqueror, and his crowd of attendant officers, came in with many a prisoner whose name might have honoured the contract of the noblest marriage.

And what brought now these congregated groups to the altar foot of Saint Simon's at Westende? So many of different countries and various creeds? To witness the solemn knot briefly yet firmly tied by the prior-Count, who with his own lips pronounced the nuptial rite.

Theresa, the wildly happy Theresa, had yet very much to learn of all the winding ways that had so long kept her back, but finally led to bliss. Our readers require no explanation. 'They have not been deceived or doubtful, like our poor, baffled, and bewildered heroine. They have from the first understood the romantic fancy of our *hero*, which would only let him gain his prize through labyrinths of innocent guile and perilous risk, preferring the chance of losing it for ever, to the doubt that it might not be *him*, but his name, his stall, his glory that gained the heart

he sought for. His influence on all those who knew and aided his plan has been already told, from the prince to the poor nurse that taught both him and his beloved—one their earliest steps in life. Beatrice's devotion, that made her whole nature change beneath his power, was not put to any violent proof in her personation of him, when, mounted on Rolando, whom she could almost manage like his master, she commanded the escort that brought Theresa to Welbasch, and took part in the first sortie from the beleagured castle—or when, sooner than betray Count Ivon's secret, she feigned to represent him in his character of Lambert Boonen, in that desperate moment of the castle's ruin, which had, but for a miracle, been her last.

But we recapitulate too much these never doubtful *secrets*, to which Theresa alone was blind.

One other person attended the marriage, who caused a mingled feeling of surprise and amusement to the rest. This was Cornelius Van Der

Gobble, who came unharmed after the battle from the artificial sand pit he had so ingeniously made for his safety. Shaking his old friend, Van Rozenhoed, by the hand, and wishing him joy of his daughter's marriage, he gave him from beneath his doublet, where he had faithfully carried them as a sort of under armour, a thick roll of bonds, bills, and other documents, intrusted to his care by Van Rozenhoed, which proved his wealth in the various companies of Antwerp, Amsterdam and other towns, to be tenfold his forfeited possessions in Bruges. The vast majority of his original jewels had been thus invested, and had trebled their original worth during twenty years of uninterrupted prosperity. The property in Bruges was therefore abandoned without a sigh—and the Count and Countess De Bassenveldt, shared during Siger's life, and divided at his death, a noble fortune. The only condition attached to this inheritance by Van Rozenhoed, was in favour of the coat of arms which he had adopted as his. Count Ivon willingly consented to quarter

the gold-beater's *hammer* with his own. He reconciled the apparent degradation to the dignity of his house, by its easily traced connection with the once powerful family of Bovingstier, who bore gules on a band, three mallets in a field argent, as may be seen by a reference to the manuscript of Hermicourt's "Mirror of Nobility," furnished and dated 1398.

Count Gabriel's term of exile expired on the memorable day of his son's marriage, but its results did not advance him a jot nearer the enjoyments of his native country. His hopes of becoming Bishop of Bruges terminated at the same time. The chances of the city ever recovering its liberty were lost from that moment. And the prior-count, his preferment torn from him, his ambition checked, his patrimony lost, not long survived the final blow to his pride, in the immediate appointment of his old rival, Rodoan de Berleghem dean of St. Bavan at Ghent, to the episcopal honours, which had been the long-sought object of his intrigues.

The family of Claassen, transplanted from Bru-

ges, took rapid root in Holland, where the several sons of old Claas soon caused it to spread in manifold branches of much respectability.

A black marble tablet in the chancel of St. Godule at Brussels, tells that it was stuck up to the memory of Joseph Paul Pointis, Marquess of Assembourg, and of his much beloved wife Marguerite de Lovenskerke, who both died in the year 1617.

Beatrice—whose powerful mind and force of feeling drove her so wide of the true marks of female virtue and discretion, victim of tyranny and baseness, by which she lost the real sense of purity both in religion and morals, but who still we trust has not revolted even those whom she could not captivate—saw, in the marriage of De Bassenveldt, the consummation of his happiness and the term of her own. In the pride of her heart she had laboured towards that end, and believed she could bear its accomplishment with Stoical calmness. But, no ! She was still a woman ; and when she saw the ceremony close that bound him to Theresa and severed him from her for

ever, she felt a chord snap within her heart, which was never more to be attuned to true delight. But she did not die, the common fate of weaker minds. She summoned her resolution to a long and last farewell of him whom she loved and her whom in her own despite she envied. Demanding from Prince Maurice a passage for herself and her brother, in one of the many Dutch vessels bound to Africa, they took together their way to that original clime of their unhappy race, in the hope of joining their fate with some of those expatriated tribes, who still cherished the idea of reconquering the Alpuxarras from Spain.

And now we may say farewell to such of our readers as have patiently accompanied us in our long journey, hoping they may not be startled, nor indisposed towards the true adventures of the next heroine whom we shall offer to their indulgence, by our concluding announcement that she shall be—A DUTCHWOMAN.

NOTE.

EXPLANATORY postscripts are things to be avoided, when possible ; but I must, on this occasion, get over my aversion to them, and add a page to a book which is, I fear, already perhaps too long. I never happened to read “ Old Mortality,” till within the last three days, nor did I ever see an extract or hear of the catastrophe of that thrilling performance. My pleasure in perusing its last volume this morning was sorely dashed on finding that the death of Balfour of Burley is, in point of incident, almost precisely similar to that of one of the characters in my present novel. My readers will believe my regret at the risk of having already incurred the double reproach of plagiarism and presumption. They will therefore, I hope, excuse this plea of not guilty, and take my assertion for proof of innocence, coupled with the recollection that the fate of Martin Schenck is strictly historical, although that of his fellow-sufferer may perhaps only be found in the records to which I had exclusive access. And if my readers acquit me, the author from whom I may seem to have stolen will, I am sure, still more readily do so, should his eye ever glance over this tale. To him I apply no epithet of eulogy, for praise must rise up before this hierarch of romance as *fade* as the

fume of frankincense before some long-accustomed high priest. Such incidents as this may, however, tell him of the deep influence his writings have excited even in those who are not his intentional copyists, but who catch, unknown to themselves, the reflection of his tone, and (if I may so express it) the echo of his imagination. Yet I am not making, in this hurried protest (which I hope will be in time to catch my book yet unpublished in London), a formal disavowal of imitation. I have no dread of incurring that imputation. The best painters and dramatists never shrank from it. They took the same course as the masters they admired, without fear and without servility. Had they *strained* for originality, they had never produced any thing worthy of being copied. The man of any mind will be sure to leave his distinctive imprint on his works, whether they be traced with pen or pencil ; and the great master to whose school he belongs, may be satisfied that the followers who trace his steps have little chance of treading on his heels.

Brussels, July 28, 1830.

THE END.

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